

MAY 1915

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



BEGINNING A NEW NOVEL BY

Mrs. Humphry Ward

Archie Quinn



PLAYING STORE

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MAY RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealers after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated.

Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publishers, North American Building, CHICAGO
 LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

MALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, 1172 Fifth Avenue Building, New York
 R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.
 Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.



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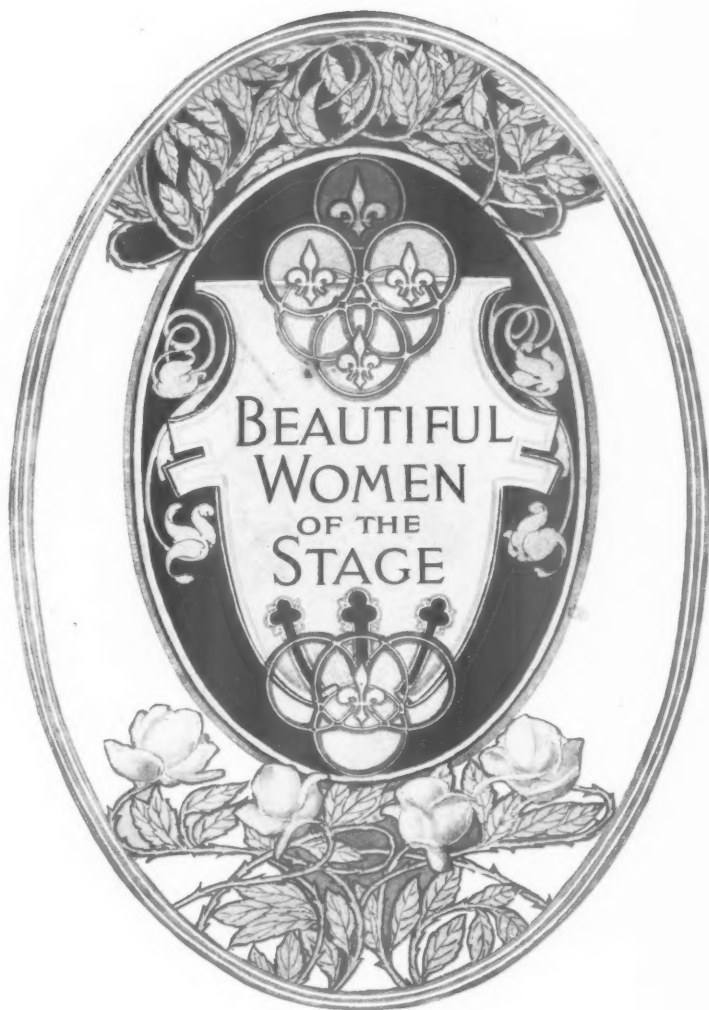
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in "Innocent"
Photograph by White Studio, New York



FLORENCE REED
in "The Yellow Ticket"
Photograph by White Studio, New York



LOUISE DRESSER
in "Hello Broadway"
Photograph by White Studio, New York



AILEEN WILSON
in "Within the Law"
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MLLE. NATALIE
in Vaudeville

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in "The Belle of Bond Street."
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ROZSIKA DOLLY
in "Hello Broadway"
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MURIEL HUDSON
in Ziegfeld's "Midnight Follies"
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VESSIE FARRELL
playing Stock roles

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MIZZI HAJOS
in "Sari"

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ADELE BLOOD
in Vaudeville
Photograph by White Studio, New York



ANN O'DAY

playing Stock roles

Photograph by Strauss-Peyton Studios, Kansas City, Mo.



The rain beat upon her so heavily that she staggered. The narrow ravine was bank full, and as it grew deeper the waters rushed down in torrents.

Drawn by Walter Tittle to illustrate one of the scenes in Cyrus Townsend Brady's new novel, "The Island of Surprise;" see page 166, of this issue.

Walter Tittle

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

May
1915

RAY LONG,
Editor

Vol. XXV
No 1

**"A GREAT
SUCCESS"**

the new novel by

**MRS.
HUMPHRY
WARD**

begins on the next page. It is the brilliantly written story of the wife of a genius. In the first paragraphs you find the husband arrogant and extravagant in the first flush of his success, the wife fearful and cautious, but wonderfully proud that the world at last is seeing the qualities she knew were in her man. Turn the page and meet Doris and Arthur Meadows. You will find them the most absorbing characters this great novelist has drawn, and she always has the faculty of writing real people into a book. The novel is beautifully illustrated by C. H. Taffs, one of the English painter-illustrators.

THE RED BOOK IS SETTING THE
PACE IN THE MAGAZINE WORLD

ILLUSTRATED
BY C. H. TAFFS



A GREAT SUCCESS

A brilliant new novel by the author of "The Mar-

CHAPTER I

"A RTHUR! What did you give the man?"

"Half a crown, my dear! Now don't make a fuss. I know exactly what you're going to say!"

"Half a crown!" said Doris Meadows, in consternation. "The fare was one and twopence. Of course he thought you mad. But I'll get it back!"

She ran to the open window, crying "Hi!" to the driver of a taxicab, who, having put down his fares, was just on the point of starting from the door of the small semi-detached house in a South Kensington street which owned Arthur and Doris Meadows for its master and mistress.

The driver turned at her call.

"Hi! Stop! You've been over-paid!"

The man grinned all over, made her a low bow, and made off as fast as he could.

Arthur Meadows, behind her, went into a fit of laughter, and as his wife, discomfited, turned back into the room he threw a triumphant arm around her.

"I had to give him half a crown, dear, or burst. Just look at these letters—and you know what a mail we had this morning! Now don't bother about the taxi. What does it matter? Come and open the mail."

Whereupon Doris Meadows felt herself forcibly drawn down to a seat on the sofa beside her husband, who threw a bundle of letters upon his wife's lap, and then turned eagerly to open others, of which his own hands were full.

"Hm! Two more publishers' letters, asking for the book—don't they wish



"Well, hang it, if I don't catch the mail, they must wait, that's all!" said Meadows peevishly.

By Mrs. Humphry Ward

riage of William Ashe," "Robert Elsmere," etc.

they may get it! But I could have made a far better bargain if I'd only waited a fortnight! Just my luck! One—two—four autograph fiends! The last—a lady, of course!—wants a page of the first lecture—calm! Invitations from the Scottish Athenæum, the Newcastle Academy, the Birmingham Literary Guild, the Glasgow Poetic Society, the 'British Philosophers,' the Dublin Dilettanti—Heavens, how many more! None of them offering cash, as far as I can see—only fame—pure and undefiled! Hullo! That's a compliment! The Parnassians have put me on their council. And last year, I was told, I couldn't even get in as an ordinary member. Dash their impudence! This is really astounding! I must say, it's really astounding! What are yours, darling?"

TUMBLING all his opened letters on the sofa; Arthur Meadows rose in sheer excitement and confronted his wife with a flushed countenance. He was a tall, broadly-built, loose-limbed fellow, with a fine shaggy head, whereof various black locks were apt to fall forward over his eyes, constantly needing to be thrown back by a picturesque action of the hand. The features were large and regular, the complexion dark, the eyes a pale blue, under bushy brows. The whole aspect of the man, indeed, was not unworthy of the adjective *Olympian*, already freely applied to it by some of the enthusiastic women students attending his now famous lectures. One girl artist, learned in classical archæology and a haunter of the British Museum, had made a charcoal study of a well-known Jupiter of the Augustan period,

on the same sheet with a rapid sketch of Meadows when lecturing; a performance which had been much handed about in the lecture-room, though always just avoiding—strangely enough—the eyes of the lecturer. The expression of slumbrous power, the mingling of dream and energy in the Olympian countenance, had been, in the opinion of the majority, extremely well caught. Only Doris Meadows, the lecturer's wife, herself an artist, and a much better one than the author of the drawing, had smiled a little queerly, on being allowed a sight of it.

However, she was no less excited by the batch of letters her husband had allowed her to open, than he by his. Her bundle included, so it appeared, letters from several leading politicians; one, discussing in a most animated and friendly tone the lecture of the week before on "Lord George Bentinck;" and two others, dealing with the first lecture of the series, the brilliant pen-portrait of Disraeli, which—partly owing to feminine influence behind the scenes—had been given verbatim, and with much preliminary trumpeting, in two or three Tory newspapers and had produced a real sensation, of that mild sort indeed which alone the British public—which does not love lectures—is capable of receiving from the report of one. Persons in the political world had relished its plain speaking; dames and councilors of the Primrose League had read the praise with avidity, and skipped the criticism; while the mere men and women of letters had appreciated a style, crisp, unhackneyed and alive. The second lecture on "Lord George Bentinck" had been crowded, and the crowd had included several Cabinet Ministers, and those great ladies of the moment who gather like vultures to the feast, on any similar occasion. The third lecture, on "Palmerston and Lord John," had been not only crowded, but crowded out; and London was by now fully aware that it possessed in Arthur Meadows a person capable of painting a series of La Bruyère-like portraits of modern men, as vivid, biting, and "topical" as the great French series were in their day.

Applications for the coming lecture on "Lord Randolph" were arriving by every mail, and those to follow after—on men just dead, and others still alive—would probably have to be given in a much larger hall than at present engaged, so certain was the intelligent public that in going to hear Arthur Meadows on the most admired—or the most detested—personalities of the day, they at least ran no risk of wishy-washy, panegyric. Meadows had proved himself daring both in compliment and attack; nothing could be sharper than his thrusts, or more Olympian than his homage. There were those indeed who talked of "airs" and "mannerisms," but their faint voices were lost in the general shouting.

"WONDERFUL!" said Doris, at last, looking up from the last of these epistles. "I really didn't know, Arthur, you were such a great man."

Her eyes rested on him with a fond but rather puzzled expression.

"Well, of course, dear, you've always seen the seamy side of me!" said Meadows, with the slightest change of tone and laugh. "Perhaps now you'll believe me when I say that I'm not always lazy, when I seem so—that a man must have time to think, and smoke, and dawdle, if he's to write anything decent—and can't always rush at the first job that offers. When you thought I was idling—I wasn't! I was gathering up impressions. Then came an attractive piece of work, one that suited me—and I rose to it. There, you see!"

He threw back his head, with a look at his wife, half combative, half merry.

Doris' forehead puckered a little.

"Well, thank heaven it *has* turned out well!" she said, with a deep breath. "Where we should have been if it hadn't, I'm sure I don't know! And, as it is—by the way, Arthur, have you got that packet ready for New York?" Her tone was quick and anxious.

"What, the proofs of 'Dizzy'? Oh, goodness, that'll do any time. Don't bother, Doris. I'm really rather done, and this mail is—well, upon my word, it's overwhelming!" Gathering up the

letters, he threw himself with an air of fatigue into a long chair, his hands behind his head. "Perhaps after tea and a cigarette I shall feel more fit," he averred.

"Arthur, you know to-morrow is the last day for catching the New York mail."

"Well, hang it, if I don't catch it, they must wait, that's all!" said Meadows peevishly. "If they wont take it, somebody else will."

"They" represented the editor and publisher of a famous New York magazine, who had agreed by cable to give a large sum for the "Dizzy" lecture, provided it reached them by a certain date. Doris twisted her lip.

"Arthur—do think of the bills!"

"Darling, don't be a nuisance! If I succeed, I shall make money. And if this isn't a success, I don't know what is!" He pointed to the letters on his lap, an impatient gesture which dislodged a certain number of them, so that they came rustling to the floor.

"Hullo! Here's one you haven't opened. Another coronet! Gracious! I believe it's the woman who asked us to dinner a fortnight ago, and we couldn't go."

Meadows sat up with a jerk, all languor dispelled, and held out his hand for the letter.

"Lady Dunstable, by George! I thought she'd ask us—though you don't deserve it, Doris, for you didn't take any trouble at all about her first invitation."

"We were engaged!" cried Doris, interrupting him, her eyebrows mounting.

"We could have got out of it perfectly. But now, listen to this:

"Dear Mr. Meadows, I hope your wife will excuse my writing to you instead of to her, as you and I are already acquainted. Can I induce you both to come to Crosby Ledgers for a week-end, on July 16th? We hope to have a pleasant party, a diplomat or two, the Home Secretary, and General Hichen—perhaps some others. You would, I am sure, admire our hill country, and I should like to show you some of the precious autographs we have inherited. Yours sincerely—Rachel Dunstable.

"If your wife brings a maid, perhaps she will kindly let me know."

DORIS laughed, and the amused scorn of her laugh annoyed her husband. However, at that moment, their small house parlor-maid entered with the tea-tray, and Doris rose to make a place for it. The parlor-maid put it down with much unnecessary noise, and Doris, looking at her in alarm, saw that her expression was sulky and her eyes red. When the girl had departed, Mrs. Meadows said with resignation:

"There! That one will give me notice to-morrow!"

"Well, I'm sure you could easily get a better!" said her husband sharply.

Doris shook her head.

"The fourth in six months!" she said, sighing. "And she really is a good girl."

"I suppose as usual she complains of me!" The voice was that of an injured man.

"Yes, dear, she does! They all do. You give them a lot of extra work already, and all these things you have been buying lately—oh, Arthur, if you *wouldn't* buy things!—mean more work. You know that copper coal-scuttle you sent in yesterday?"

"Well, isn't it a beauty? A real Georgian piece!" cried Meadows, indignantly.

"I dare say it is. But it has to be cleaned. When it arrived Jane came to see me in this room, shut the door and put her back against it. 'There's another of them beastly copper coal-scuttles come!' You should have seen her eyes blazing. 'And I should like to know, ma'am, who's going to clean it—'cause I can't.' And I just had to promise her it might go dirty."

"Lazy minx!" said Meadows, good-humoredly, with his mouth full of tea-cake. "At last I have something good to look at in this room." He turned his eyes caressingly towards the new coal-scuttle. "I suppose I shall have to clean it myself!"

Doris laughed again—this time almost hysterically, but was checked by a fresh entrance of Jane, who with an air of defiance deposited a heavy parcel beside her mistress, and flounced out again.



Doris turned towards him: "I never could understand how *Cinderella* enjoyed the ball." "For thinking of the
of the clock that



clock that was going to strike?" laughed Sir Charles. "No, no! You can't mean that. It's the expectation doubles the pleasure."

"What is this?" said Doris in consternation. "Books? More books? Heavens, Arthur, what have you been ordering now! I couldn't sleep last night for thinking of the book-bills."

"You little goose! Of course I must buy books! Aren't they my tools, my stock in trade? Haven't these lectures justified the book-bills a dozen times over?"

This time Arthur Meadows surveyed his wife in real irritation and disgust.

"But Arthur! You could get them *all* at the London Library—you know you could!"

"And pray how much time do I waste in going backwards and forwards after books! Any man of letters worth his salt wants a library of his own—within reach of his hand!"

"Yes, if he can pay for it!" said Doris, with plaintive emphasis, as she ruefully turned over the costly volumes which the parcel contained.

"Don't fash yourself, my dear child! Why, what I'm getting for the 'Dizzy' lecture alone is nearly enough to pay all the bills."

"It isn't! And just think of all the others! Well—never mind!"

Doris' protesting mood suddenly collapsed. She sat down on a stool beside her husband, rested her elbow on his knee and, chin in hand, surveyed him with a softened countenance. Doris Meadows was not a beauty; only pleasant faced, with good eyes, and a strong, expressive mouth. Her brown hair was perhaps her chief point, and she wore it rippled and coiled so as to set off a shapely head and neck. It was always a secret grievance with her that she had so little positive beauty. And her husband had never flattered her on the subject. In the early days of their marriage, she had timidly asked him after one of their bridal dinner-parties, at which she had worn her wedding-dress, "Did I look nice to-night? Do you—do you ever think I look pretty, Arthur?"

He had looked her over, with an odd change of expression—careless affection passing into something critical and cool: "I'm never ashamed of you, Doris—in any company. Wont you be satisfied

with that?" She had been far from satisfied; the phrase had burnt in her memory from then till now. But she knew Arthur had not meant to hurt her, and she bore him no grudge. And by now, she was too well acquainted with the rubs and prose of life, too much occupied with house-books, and rough servants, and the terror of an over-drawn account, to have any time or thought to spare to her own looks. Fortunately, she had an instinctive love for neatness and delicacy; so her little figure, besides being agile and vigorous—capable of much dignity too, on occasion—was of a singular trimness and grace in all its appointments. Her trousseau was long since exhausted, and she rarely had a new dress. But slovenly she could not be.

IT was the matter of a new dress which was now indeed running in her mind. She took up Lady Dunstable's letter, and read it pensively through again.

"You can accept for yourself, Arthur, of course," she said, looking up. "But I can't possibly go."

Meadows protested loudly: "You have no excuse at all!" he declared hotly. "Lady Dunstable has given us a month's notice. You *can't* get out of it. Do you want me to be known as a man who accepts smart invitations without his wife? There is no more caddish creature in the world!"

Doris could not help smiling upon him. But her mouth was none the less determined.

"I haven't got a single frock that's fit for Crosby Ledgers. And I'm not going on tick for a new one!"

"I never heard anything so absurd! Sha'n't we have more money in a few weeks than we've had for years?"

"I dare say. It's all wanted. Besides, I have my work to finish."

"My dear Doris!"

A slight red mounted in Doris' cheeks: "Oh, you may be as scornful as you like! But ten pounds is ten pounds, and I like keeping engagements."

The work in question meant illustrations for a children's book. Doris had accepted the commission with eagerness, and had been going regularly to the

Hampstead studio of an Academician—her mother's first cousin—who was glad to supply her with some of the "properties" she wanted for her drawings.

"I shall soon not allow you to do anything of the kind," said Meadows with decision.

"On the contrary! I shall always take paid work when I can get it," was the firm reply, "—unless—"

"Unless what?"

"You know," she said quietly. Meadows was silent a moment, then reached out for her hand, which she gave him. They had no children; and as he well knew, Doris pined for them.

But he was not going to be beaten in the matter of Crosby Ledgers. They had a long and heated discussion, at the end of which Doris surrendered.

"Very well! I shall have to spend a week in doing up my old black gown, and it will be a botch at the end of it. But—*nothing will induce me to get a new one!*"

She delivered this ultimatum with her hands behind her, a defeated but still resolute young person. Meadows, having won the main battle, left the rest to providence, and went off to his "den," to read all his letters through once more—agreeable task!—and to write a note of acceptance to the Home Secretary, who had asked him to luncheon. Doris was not included in the invitation—"But anybody may ask a husband—or a wife—to lunch, separately. That's understood. I sha'n't do it often, however—that I can tell them!" And justified by this Spartan temper as to the future, he wrote a charming note, accepting the delights of the present, so full of epigram that the Cabinet Minister to whom it was addressed had no sooner read it than he consigned it instantaneously to his wife's collection of autographs.

MEANWHILE Doris was occupied partly in soothing the injured feelings of Jane, and partly in smoothing out and inspecting her one evening frock. She decided that it would take her a week to "do it up;" and that she would do it herself. "A week wasted," she thought, "and all for nothing. What do we want with Lady Dunstable!

She'll flatter Arthur, and make him lazy. They all do! And I've no use for her at all. *Maid* indeed! Does she think nobody can exist without that appendage? How I should like to make her live on four hundred a year, with a husband that *will* spend seven!"

She stood, half amused, half frowning, beside the bed on which lay her one evening frock. But the frown passed away, effaced by an expression much softer and tenderer than anything she had allowed Arthur to see of late. Of course she delighted in Arthur's success; she was proud, indeed, through and through. Hadn't she always known that he had this gift, this quick, vivacious power of narrative, this genius—for it was something like it—for literary portraiture? And now at last the stimulus had come, and the opportunity with it. Could she ever forget the anxiety of the first lecture, the difficulty she had had in making him finish it, his careless, unbusiness-like management of the whole affair! But then had come the burst of praise and popularity—and Arthur was a new man. No difficulty—or scarcely any—in getting him to work since then! Applause, so new and intoxicating, had lured him on, as she had been wont to lure the black pony of her childhood with a handful of sugar. Yes, her Arthur was a genius—she had always known it. And something of a child, too—lazy, willful, and sensuous—that too she had known for some time. And she loved him with all her heart.

"But I wont have him spoiled by those fine ladies!" she said to herself, with frowning clear-sightedness. "They make a perfect fool of him. Now then, I'd better write to Lady Dunstable. Of course she ought to have written to me!"

So she sat down and wrote:

Dear Lady Dunstable:

We have much pleasure in accepting your kind invitation, and I will let you know our train later. I have no maid, so—

But at this point Mrs. Meadows, struck by a sudden idea, threw down her pen.

"Heavens! Suppose I took Jane? Somebody told me the other day that

nobody got any attention at Crosby Ledgers without a maid. And it might bribe Jane into staying. I should feel a horrid snob—but it would be rather fun—especially as Lady Dunstable will certainly be immensely surprised. The fare would be only about five shillings; Jane would get her food for two days at the Dunstables' expense—and I should have a friend! I'll do it."

So with her eyes dancing, Doris tore up the note, and began again:

Dear Lady Dunstable:

We have much pleasure in accepting your kind invitation, and I will let you know our train later. As you kindly permit me, I will bring a maid.

Yours sincerely,

DORIS MEADOWS.

THE month which elapsed between Lady Dunstable's invitation and the Crosby Ledgers party was spent by Doris first in "doing up" her frock, and then in taking the bloom off it at various dinner-parties to which they were already invited as the celebrities of the moment; in making Arthur's wardrobe presentable; in watching over the tickets and receipts of the weekly lectures; in collecting the press cuttings about them; in finishing her illustrations; and in instructing the awe-struck Jane, now perfectly amenable, in the mysteries that would be expected of her.

Meanwhile Mrs. Meadows heard various accounts of the parties at Crosby Ledgers from artistic and literary friends. These accounts were generally prefaced by the laughing remark: "But anything I can say is ancient history. Lady Dunstable dropped us long ago!" Anyway, it appeared that the mistress of Crosby Ledgers could be charming and could also be exactly the reverse. She was a creature of whims and did precisely as she pleased. She and Lord Dunstable were good friends, and never interfered with each other; but Lady Dunstable's devotion was reserved for her son, an unsatisfactory, chinless youth of two and twenty, who had already given his parents some trouble.

"The dreadful thing, my dear, is the *games* they play!" said the wife of a dramatist, whose one successful piece

had been followed by years of ill-fortune.

"*Games?*" said Doris. "Do you mean cards—for money?"

"Oh, dear no! Intellectual games: *Bouts-rimés*—translations; Lady Dunstable looks out the bits—and some people think the words—beforehand; paragraphs on a subject—in a particular style—Pater's, or Ruskin's or Carlyle's. Each person throws two slips into a hat. On one you write the subject, on another the name of the author whose style is to be imitated. Of course Lady Dunstable carries off all the honors. But then everybody believes she spends all the mornings preparing these things. She never comes down till nearly lunch time."

"This is really appalling!" said Doris, with round eyes. "I have forgotten everything I ever knew."

As for her own impressions of the great lady, she had only seen her once in the semi-darkness of the lecture-room, and could only remember a long, fallow face, with striking eyes, and a pointed chin, a general look of distinction and an air of one accustomed to the chief seat at any board—whether the feasts of reason, or those of a more ordinary kind.

As the days went on, Doris, for all her sturdy self-reliance, began to be a little nervous inwardly. She had been quite well-educated, first at a good high school, and then in the class-rooms of a provincial university; and as the clever daughter of a clever doctor in large practice, she had always been in touch with the intellectual world, especially on its scientific side. And for nearly two years before her marriage, she had been a student at the Slade School. But since her imprudent love-match with a literary man had plunged her into the practical work of a small household, run on a scanty and precarious income, she had been obliged, one after another, to let the old interests go—except the drawing. That was good enough to bring her a little money, as an illustrator, designer of Christmas cards, etc., and she filled most of her spare time with it.

But now she feverishly looked out



"Please, ma'am. I'll have to have an evening dress—or I can't go in to supper!" "What on earth do you mean?" said Doris, staring at her. "Every maid in this 'ouse ma'am, 'as got to dress for supper. The maids go in the 'ousekeeper's room, an' they've all on 'em got dresses V-shaped, or cut square, or something. This black dress, ma'am, wont do at all. I couldn't dream, ma'am, of goin' in different to the others!"

some of her old books—Pater's "Studies," a volume of Huxley's essays, "Shelley" and "Keats" in the "Men of Letters" series. She borrowed two or three of the political biographies with which Arthur's shelves were crowded, having all the while, however, the dispiriting conviction that Lady Dunstable had been dandled on the knees of every English prime minister since her birth, and had been the blood relation of all of them, except perhaps "Mr. G.," whose blood no doubt had not been blue enough to entitle him to that privilege.

However, she must do her best. She kept these feelings and preparations entirely secret from Arthur, and she saw the day of the visit dawn in a mood of mingled expectation and revolt.

CHAPTER II

IT was a perfect June evening: Doris was seated on one of the spreading lawns of Crosby Ledgers—a low Georgian house, much added to at various times, and now a pleasant medley of pillared verandas, tiled tops, cupolas and dormer windows, apparently unpretending, but, as many people knew, one of the most luxurious of English country houses.

Lady Dunstable, in a flowing dress of lilac crêpe and a large black hat, had just given Mrs. Meadows a second cup of tea, and was clearly doing her duty—and showing it—to a guest whose entertainment could not be trusted to go of itself. The only other persons at the tea-table—the Meadows having arrived late—were an elderly man with long *Dundreary* whiskers, in a Panama hat and a white waistcoat, and a lady of uncertain age, plump, kind-eyed, and merry-mouthed, in whom Doris had at once divined a possible harbor of refuge from the terrors of the situation. Arthur was strolling up and down the lawn with the Home Secretary, smoking and chatting—talking: indeed nineteen to the dozen, and entirely at his ease. A few other groups were scattered over the grass; and girls in white dresses, with young men in flannels, were playing tennis in the distance. A lake at the bot-

tom of the sloping garden made light and space in a landscape otherwise too heavily walled in by thick woodland. White swans floated on the lake, and the June trees beyond were in their freshest and proudest leaf. A church-tower rose appropriately in a corner of the park, and on the other side of the deer-fence beyond the lake, a herd of red deer were feeding. Doris could not help feeling as though the whole scene had been lately painted for a new "high life" play at St. James' Theater, and she half expected to see Sir George Alexander walk out of the bushes.

"I suppose, Mrs. Meadows, you have been helping your husband with his lectures?" said Lady Dunstable, a little languidly, as though the heat oppressed her. She was making play with a cigarette, and her half-shut eyes were fixed on the "lion's" wife. The eyes fascinated Doris. Surely they were artificially blackened, above and below? And the lips—had art been delicately invoked, or was Nature alone responsible?

"I copy things for Arthur," said Doris. "Unfortunately, I can't type."

At the sound of the young and musical voice, the gentleman with the *Dundreary* whiskers,—Sir Charles Malford,—who had seemed half asleep, turned sharply to look at the speaker. Doris too was in a white dress, of the simplest stuff and make; but it became her. So did the straw hat with its wreath of wild roses, which she herself had trimmed that morning. There was not the slightest visible sign of tremor in the young woman; and Sir Charles Malford's inner mind applauded her.

"No fool—and a lady," he thought. "Let's see what Rachel will make of her!"

"Then you don't help him in the writing?" said Lady Dunstable, still with the same detached air.

Doris laughed.

"I don't know what Arthur would say if I proposed it! He never lets anybody go near him when he's writing."

"I see—like all geniuses, he's dangerous—on the loose?" Was Lady Dunstable's smile just touched with sarcasm?

Continued on page 185 of this issue.

ILLUSTRATED
BY F. FOX



LETTERS FROM
A HOME BUILDER

Welcome To Our City By Ring W. Lardner

Author of "Tour No. 2," "Own Your Own Home," etc.

THE Gross family is settled in its suburban home! Of course, you remember the Grosses. Ring Lardner's story, "Own Your Own Home," reproduced the letters of Fred A. Gross, a city detective, to his brother Charley, on the woes of a city flat dweller who decided to build in a suburb. Mr. Lardner now offers another set of letters. Read them and forget your troubles.

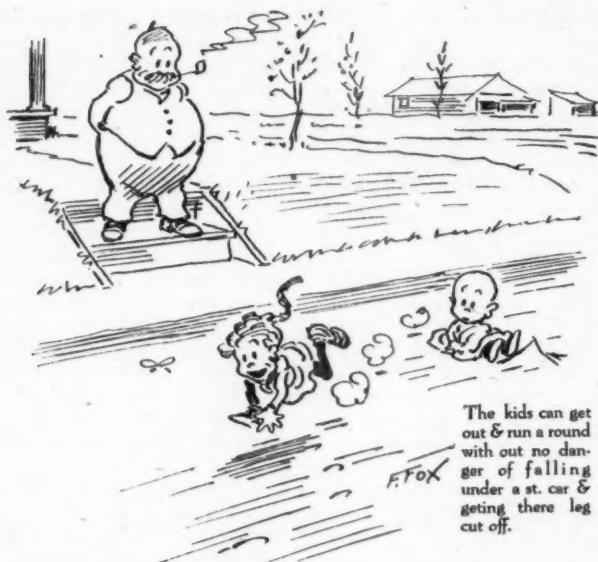
Allison, Ill., July 8.
BROTHER Charley. well Charley evry things going a long smoth & last wk. I payed the 1st. int. on my lone down to the bank and now I dont half to worry a bout that again untill Jan. Graces old man come acrost with the money so as I could pay the int. & didnt make no holler a bout it but I bet he wishes I & Grace had of stuck in our flat over on the s. side insted of building because we was not never so hard up when we was liveing in the flat that we had to ask him to pay our rent.

I dont like to be no drag on the old man but you can see how it is Charley or that is you could see if you had build a house. It looks like you dont run up agin the real expences untill youve got it all build. I allways thot it was real old houses that half to be repaired &

fixed up all the wile but Im finding out now that the new ones is twict as bad as the old ones.

But dont think we aint satisfide Charley because wear perfectly satisfide so dont get the idear we aint satisfide & you couldnt higher Grace & I to go back in town & live in a flat because they aint nothing to that kind of liveing & this has got it beat all hollo. The babys is a hole lot better than they was in the city. That is they would be if the house wasent damp & if it wasent for the smell of the paint that I guess we aint never going to get rid of it. But they aint all cooped up like they was in Chi & now they can get out & run a round with out no danger of falling under a st. car & geting there leg cut off. By a st. car.

of corse we miss the Walters & the Arnolds & others that we made fren's



The kids can get out & run a round with out no danger of falling under a st. car & getting there leg cut off.

if them in the city a speshally Grace but as I say if they cared any thing a bout us they could get out here & see us because they know Grace cant get a way on acct. the babys & besides this towns got plenty of fine peopl living in this town & as soon is we get acquainted we can for get all a bout the peopl we knowed in Chi & not never think a bout them.

I guess the last time I wrote to you we wasent no wheres near setteled but wear pretty well setteled now & things a round the house is beginning to look O. K. & you can open most of the windows if you start them with a crow bar & then give a quick jerk.

kindest to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., July 24.

DEAR Charley. I supose you been getting a hole lot of rain to because I see in the paper whers its been raining all over the u s & if it rains any more I will half to buy 1 of these here divers sutes to go down in the basemunt with it & fix the heater that we heat the hot water with. A bout the 2d. day it beggin to rain the water beggin runing in the basemunt & now its pretty near as deep like it was in the brandywine

crick where I & you lerned to swim do you remember Charley. I called up the plumber & he come up & seen it & says the drane pipes would carry it off & I had to give him \$.50 cents for telling me that & it wasent true at that because they aint carryed none of it off as far as I can see & if a plumber gets \$.50 a peace for evry time he lise to you I wonder what does he charge when he tells a man the truth only I guess that dont never hapen. well any

way you could dive off the top step of the stares in to the basemunt & not bump your head on the floor & Grace says I should ought to dig some angel worms out in the yard & set on the basemunt stares & fish but I guess all the fish in the house is living up stares. I mean wear the fish for building a house. Suckers see Charley.

An other good thing all the wood that was left over from building the house is down in the basemunt & Grace has been using it up pretty fast building fires in the fire place all tho its been so hot outdoors & in the house to that you cant hardly stand it but she says the fire looks so pretty that she would like to keep it burning all the wile & why not when we got all that wood. Well I says that wood will burn just as good in the winter time when you need a fire in the fire place & it will look just as pretty burning when its cold & the sooner you burn up all that extra wood the sooner we will half to buy some reglar wood to burn. I says if your going to throw a way money just to make things look pretty why dont you buy a car lode of dimonds & scatter them a round the front yard. they would look swell as long as they last.

well she says the fire keeps me from geting lonesom. I says if your lonesom why dont you dress the babys up & go out and see some body & she says I aint got no close to ware thats good enough for this place so my little talk is going to cost me \$20.00 dollars because shes going to buy some clothe & have a couple dresses made up. But as I say we can save on fire wood as long as the basemunts full of water because you cant get to where the wood is at with out buying a sale boat or some thing & even if you got the wood it wouldnt burn on acct. it being soaked.

Regards to Mary & we wisht you could get out & see us.

F. A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Aug. 13.

BROTHER Charley. well Charley it looks now like we was going to bust in to socitey & Grace wont be lonesom no more. She got her close made & all finnishd up 2 days a go all ready & I thot shed go calling right a way but she says no it wouldnt be right to take the childern a long the 1st. time she interduced her self to the peopl out here on acct. they might cut up & rase the devvil & may be brake some thing in some strangers house so she says it was

up to me to stay home with the childern wile she went a round & made a few calls & Im going to stay home with the babys next Sun. after noon because thats the 1st. day I can get off on acct. theys 2 other fellows in the dept. laying off now & the rest of us is kept pretty busy. but of corse me not being able to go a long with her & make the calls Ive got to get some cards printed so she can stick them on the piano or some wheres in the house where shes calling at so it looks like I wanted to come but couldent.

Grace says she didnt hardly know where to make the calls because we dont know where no body lives that is we dont know if the famly 2 doors a way from us is pres. of the gas co. or runs a hawk shop. But I told her the best way to do was start right in on this side of the st. we live on & go from house to house & if she seen after she got in that the peopl wasent no good she could say she made a miss take. the name of the peopl that lives next door is Hamilton because thats what the real estate man told us when we got the lot so you see we know his name & when Grace gos up to the door & says is Mr. Hamilton in they will be tickeld to deth on acct. of us knowing there name & wile she is calling on Mr. Hamilton she can feel a round untill she knows what is the name of the peopl that lives on the other side of them & so on.

She wont stay more than 1 hour or so in 1 place the 1st. time & she wont be able to cover more than the 1st. 3 houses the 1st. day, but probly she will find 1 or 2 of the ladies thats good sports & will be willing to come over & stay with the childern a day or 2 next wk. so as Grace can go & call on the other peopl a long the st. with out waiting for the next P. M. I can lay off.

the Hamiltons has got a swell big house build out of stons or concrete blocks & they probly got a bbl. of



You could dive off the top step of the stares in the basemunt & not bump your head on the floor.

money but you know the old saying Charley all men was crated free and wear just as good is them even if we got all my pay for the next 30 yrs. spent all ready.

Best to Mary.

F. A. GROSS.

. Allison, Ill., Aug. 16.

BROTHER Charley. well Charley Grace wont be lonesom no more because now she called on 4 famlys a long the st. to-day insted of 3 like she intend it & of corse the more you call on the more of them has got to call on you back. The reason she made it 4 insted of 3 was on acct. of her only staying to the Hamiltons $\frac{1}{4}$ of a hr. because they says they was going out some wheres & would half to leave her.

we had a early dinner & she got over to the Hamiltons a bout 1 in the P. M. & she was toged up in her new close & looked like a million \$.

she told me all a bout it when she come home. A womman come to the door & Grace says how do you do Mrs. Hamilton I was afrade youd be out & the womman says who did you want to see & Grace says you or Mr. Hamilton or the both of them & the womman says I will see are they in. So the womman says what name & Grace says Grace Gross & the womman says have you got a card a long with you & Grace didnt have none but the cards I had printed so she give her one of them. They set me back \$.50 for 100 of them Charley but I thot I might as well make it a good 1 wile I was doing it & besides if Grace dont loose none of them 100 should ought to last her untill shes called on the hole town. The cards says on them F. A. Gross asst. Chief of Detectives Chicago Police dept. & then down on the bottom 20 years in the service in red tipe.

The higher girl left Grace standing in the vestry bull & pretty soon a man come out & he was Mr. Hamilton & he ast Grace to come in the parler & set down so Grace went in & Mr. Hamilton says what can I do for you & Grace was kind of im barrist & couldnt say nothing & Mr. Hamilton says aint you made a miss take or may be you think

I can give you some informashun a bout some thing & Grace seen that was a good chance to find out what was the name of the peopl that lived in the next house next to the Hamiltons so she ast him & he says there name is Carpenter & she says what busness was they in & Mr. Hamilton says if you want to find out any thing more a bout them you will half to ask them them self. So Grace says it didnt make no diffrents weather she knowed any thing more a bout them or not & then she says hows your wife & Mr. Hamilton says what are you trying to get at. He says Im sure you must of made some miss take because nether I or Mrs. Hamilton have did any thing agannst the law or the Carpenters nether & Grace says what do you mean & Mr. Hamilton says what do you mean your self comeing a round trying to pry in to some bodys affares. We aint use to receiving calls from female detectives. & then all of a sudden Grace caught on to what was he getting at.

You see Charley Mr. Hamilton thot she was a detective on acct. the card shed give the higher girl & he thot it was her card & not my card & when Grace seen what had came off she pretty near died laughing & all the wile Mr. Hamilton just stood there and looked at her & finely when she could say some thing she says thats a grate joke & Mr. Hamilton says may be it is but its over my head & then Grace explained it to him the hole thing & told him we was his new neighbors & she was just paying him a frendly call so pretty soon he beggin laughing to & says he would call his wife because the joke was too good to keep. His wife come in & Grace ast her if Mr. Hamilton had told her a bout his miss take & she says no so Grace had to explane it all over again only Mrs. Hamilton must of ett to much dinner. She didnt laugh at all but just set there like she was in pane & pretty soon she says she was sorry Grace couldnt stay longer but her & Mr. Hamilton was going out & would Grace excuse them & Grace says sure & got up to go but then Mr. Hamilton come in & told Grace to be sure and hand 1 of them cards to who ever come to the door over to Carpenters so Grace prom-

ussed she would & then she says good-by to Mr. & Mrs. Hamilton & told them to be sure & come over & see us & Mr. Hamilton says he certunly would weather Mrs. Hamilton did or didnt & he was just kidding a little but Mrs. Hamilton must of got jellus a bout him & Grace jolling each other because she slammed the front door when Grace come out. Or else as I say she ett to much dinner probly.

So then Grace went to the Carpenters & rung the door bell & Mr. Carpenter him self come to the door & she give him 1 of the cards & he says well whats the charge & she seen he was makeing the same miss take Mr. Hamilton made so she went a long with it & says she would like to talk to he & his wife a few minuts & he says you can talk to me but I cant bother my wife because she aint finnished her dinner & then Grace told him to go a head and finnish his dinner to but he says he wouldnt untill she told him what she wanted so she explained the joke & told him what come off over to Hamiltons & then he laughed & says he would finnish his dinner & bring his wife in so Grace set there in the parler a wile & finely Mr. & Mrs. Carpenter come in & she set there talking to them pretty near a hr.

& they had a grate time talking & laughing & wile she was there some body come to the front door & Mr. Carpenter went to the door & Grace says it sounded like Mr. Hamiltons voice out side the door & he ast Mr. Carpenter was he arested & Mr. Carpenter went out on the porch & Grace couldnt hear what was they saying but of corse they was come pareing nots a bout the joke be-



She pretty near died laughing & all the wile Mr. Hamilton just stood there and looked at her.

cause she herd them laughing out on the porch. Well finely Mr. Carpenter come in again & finely Mrs. Carpenter ast Grace didnt she have some more calls to make so Grace says she did & she left the Carpenters & forgot to find out from them what was the name of the peopl that live in the 3d. house a way from us but it didnt make no diffrunts because the woman that come to the door at the next house told her the name & the name is Carry & Mr. Carrys the man that keeps the groserly store or 1 of them & Grace & Mrs. Carry had a nice long talk & Grace told her a bout what come off at Hamiltons & Carpenters & Mrs. Carry says she would bet Grace that they wouldnt nether the Hamiltons or the Carpenters call on us & Grace says why not & Mrs. Carry says because they aint nether 1 of them called on me yet & I have been here over 1 yr. & Grace says well did you call on them & Mrs. Carry says of corse not so they must be some bad blood some wheres that we dont know nothing a bout.

Well Grace went to Moreheads from Carrys & seen the Moreheads & then

come home & you can bet I was glad when she finely got home because little Ed & the baby both of them gets pretty mad a bout 5 P. M. in the afternoon & they was giveng me all I could do.

& Mrs. Carry says next time Grace wants to go out she can bring the babys over to her house & the higher girl will watch them.

Rgds. to Mary.

F. A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Aug. 31.

DEAR Charley. well Charley they aint nothing much come off since the last time I wrote you a letter and they aint nothing much to write a bout & I wouldnt be writeing only I was figureing on takeing a bath to-night and I cant take no bath so Im writeing you a letter insted and why I cant take no bath is because the waters shut off all over the town & the water co. says may be it wont be turned on for 2 or 3 days.

of corse I can wash my hands down town to head quarters but Grace or the kids cant wash theres unlest they go over to the Carrys where they got a sistern & that makes it pretty tough on Grace but little Ed & the baby wont make no holler and they would be tickled to deth if they didnt never half to be washed.

Any way they all ways holler like they was being murdered when you touch them with soap and water. The Hamiltons has a sistern to & I ast Grace why didnt she use theres on acct. it being next door to us & handy but Grace is kind of sore on Mrs. Hamilton for not comeing over to see us. She will come over all right when she gets up her nerve & I wouldnt worry a bout it if I was Grace but you know how wommen feels & probly Marys the same way.

Grace has called on a bout 15 or 20 famlys now & left the kids over to the

Carrys wile she was makeing the calls & her and Mrs. Carry is pretty good frends & Mr. & Mrs. Carry comes over often in the evning for a game of cards.

Im thirsty and I guess its a good thing we got a couple cases of beer in the house because they aint no water and I and Grace can drink the beer when wear thirsty & the kids can drink milk so we wont starve to deth because of some thing to drink only we cant take no bath in beer or milk.

The man from the water co. says this dont happen often I mean the pump brakeing down & he says I want to re-



I didnt male the letters but stuck them under there doors when I come home night before last.

member that Im saveing money on water bills all the wile they aint no water.

Regards to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Sep. 14.

BROTHER Charley. well Charley Im planing a big surprise for Grace and the reason Im doing it is because shes been feeling so bad over them peopl not comeing to see her. Im going to have the Hamiltons & the Carpenters over here to dinner Sun. & Grace knows theys going to be Co. but she thinks Ive ast the Walters to come out from

town. I had to tell her some body was comeing so as she would be sure and have enough to eat so I told her the Walters was comeing & she will be surprised & tickled to deth when she sees it aint the Walters but the Hamiltons & Carpenters.

the idear come to me when I was down town yest. & the way it come to me I was trying to figure out some way to cheer Grace up. So I thot of this idear & then I set down & tride to write a letter to them peopl asking them to come & it took me so long to write the 1st. I that I seen I wouldnt never have time for nothing else if I wrote 2 of them so I ast the tipewriter in the chiefs office would she write a couple of letters for me. I & her framed them up together. In the letters I says my wife would like to have them come over to dinner Sun. noon & it wasnt going to be no big party so they could ware what ever they had & not feel a shamed & we wouldnt dress up much our self so they wouldnt need to. the tipewriter didnt only half to write the letter onct because she put a peace of this here copy paper in bet. the regular paper & wrote both the letters at onct only changed the names at the top.

I cant hardly wait untill Sun. and see how surprised & tickled Grace will be.

Rgds. to Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Sep. 18.

BROTHER Charley. well Charley Im the 1 that got the supprise and not Grace. and besides a supprise I got a bad scare to because Grace carryed on so that I thot she was going to be took down sick. What do you think of them bums Charley I mean the Hamiltons & Carpenters. When they didnt pay no a tension or send me no anser to the letter I wrote them I thot sure they must be comeing because if they wasent comeing they would say so. Thats what I thot. But a long come Sun. noon & no sine of them & Grace got fichety & says what do you supose is the matter with the Walters that they dont come & I stalled her off and says may be they would come on the train that

gets here at 1 a clock & she says my dinner will all be spoiled & finely after the 1 a clock train come & no body showed up I had to tell her the truth. Grace scolded me like Id stole some money or some thing & when I says I would run over to there house & see what was the matter she says if I moved a step out side the house she would take the 2 childern & run a way & then she had histeriks & all the rest of it & she says even if them peopl had of came she would of slamed the door in there face & I dont know yet what was she sore a bout tho of corse I was a little sore my self on acct. of them peopl not letting me know or nothing. But Grace wasent sore at them but she was sore at me and if you can tell what license she had your a wonder.

I thot for a minut they may be might not of got my letters & then I remembered that I didnt male the letters but stuck them under there doors when I come home night before last so they couldn't help from getting them.

Finely I coulndt stand it no longer & beat it out of the house & took a long walk. She was better when I come back & says she was sorry shed carryed on so & she supposed I thot I was trying to do the right thing but Id made a awful mes out of it & I says could I help it if them peopl didnt have no manners & she says no it wasnt my falt but after this she wisht I would leave her to do the inviteing to the house. She didnt half to wish that Charley because Ive had more then enough for my share.

The Carrys is comeing over to-night to play cinch & may be we can get rid of some of our big Sun. dinner thats still left yet because they didnt nether 1 of us have the heart to eat it.

Regards to Mary.

F. A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Oct. 3.

DEAR Charley. well Charley it looks like we wasent dead ones after all. A little boy come to the house after supper to-night & give me a letter only it wasnt no letter but a invatation to a dance here in Allison the 17 of this mo. & the dance is being gave for the benifit of the Bellgiums that got killed in the

war. This here invatation was addressed to the Hamiltons but if we get theres they got ourn so whats the diffrents & besides you can bet I aint going over to there house to say any thing a bout it & if they dont want ourn they can come over here and get there own.

The dance is going to be down to the opira house where they give there shows when they have them. Well I guess you know how I all ways been a bout danceing Charley & never cared nothing a bout it & I was going to tell Grace of corse we wouldnt go but when I give her the invatation & seen how good she felt a bout it I didnt have the heart to say nothing a bout not going. I throwed the out side cover a way before I give Grace the invatation and she says are you sure its for us & I says didnt the boy bring it to us & besides wont our money do them Bellgiums as much good as any body elses. Tho where the Bellgiums needs help any more than I need it I cant figure out. I didnt tell Grace nothing a bout the invatation being addressed to the Hamiltons for fear shed want I should go over & change with them.

Well I says do you want to go and she says certunly but you cant dance & I says well I can go there and set a round & talk wile you dance and she says o no she wouldnt do that way & if I wouldnt dance she wouldnt go so I says all right I will brush up & practice a little & may be I can get a way with it & she says you cant do nothing of the kind because the dances there dancing now isnt nothing like what you use to dance the waltz & the 2 step and them things. They aint danceing them things no more because now there all danceing the 1 step walk & the foxs trot and we will half to take some lessons the both of us.

I says I suppose we got a hole lot of money to throw a way on takeing danceing lessons & then she beggin to cry so I says all right you fix it up with some teacher & we will take a few lessons just enough so as to get a way with it.

So you see what Im up against now Charley & I got to take danceing lessons & then go up there & mix a round with them swell dames & get stepped on

but Grace will have the time of her life & I aint got the heart to say no. The dance ticket that come along with the invatation costs \$2.00 dollars & probly the lessons will cost that much more or may be more than that so Im lucky if I get a way with less than a 5 spot.

I suppose youve lerned the new dances all ready Charley & I wisht you was here to take my place.

Regards to Mary.

F. A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Oct. 8.

BROTHER Charley. Dident I say some thing a bout a 5 spot that this here dance business was going to cost me last time I wrote you a letter. Well Charley its going to make a 5 spot look like 30 cents before its over & I wisht Id says no in the 1st place & left Grace bellow if she wanted to. Weve taken 1 danceing lesson all ready & it costed \$2.00 dollars & we got to take an other at the same price because we aint lerned enough yet & I got to buy some pattent leather shoes & a shirt & so 4th. because Grace says they wont be no body go up there with out being drest up in a dress sute of evning close & she laughed at me when I says I was going to ware the uneform I use to ware before I was put in plane close but I bet if I wore that uneform I wouldnt be the worst looking 1 in the hall if I do say it but Grace says nothing but a evning dress sute will do so I got to rent 1 of them besides buying the junk that gos with it & the rent of the sute a lone will cost me \$3.00.

Well Grace was wondring what would she do a bout the childern wile we was to the dance & I says she should ask Mrs. Carry to take care of them & she says the Carrys is probly going to so shes going to ask Mrs. Carry is she going & if she is that will mean we will half to higher a girl some wheres to come & stay with the childern wile we go to the dance.

Regards to Mary.

FRED.

Allison, Ill., Oct. 11.

BROTHER Charley. well Charley we had some more trouble since the

I says I lived 45 years and got pretty fat before
I ever seen you.



last time I wrote you a letter only I dont know if its trouble or not but Grace feels pretty bad a bout it tho I says she shouldnt ought to worry because the Carrys wasnt no good any way. Grace was figureing on haveing Mrs. Carry come over & stay with the childern wile we was to the big dance next wk. if Mrs. Carry wasnt going to the dance her self so when the Carrys come to play cards the other night Grace ast them was they going to the dance & they says no what dance & Grace told them & ast Mrs. Carry would she come over & take care of the childern or that is she & Mr. Carry would just half to set in the house because the childern would be a sleep only of corse it wouldnt be right to go off & leave them a lone & the Carrys could just set here & play cards or do any thing they had a mind to. Well Mrs. Carry ast who was giving the dance & Grace says the invatation was sined by Wm. Marston & he was the man that the money was to be sent to only Im going to take my money a long to the dance & give it to him at the door. Well Mrs. Carry says why Mr. Marston is the real sociey

leader & Grace says well what of it & Mrs. Carry says it must of been a miss take you getting a invatation & then I buted in & says what do you mean a miss take I guess wear as good is any body & better than some & why shouldnt we get a invatation & then Mrs. Carry blowed up & says I suppose you think your better than I & my husband & I says no I dont think no such thing & she says well you get a invatation to the dance & we didnt so if you go that will show you think your better than us.

I says it wont show no such a thing because you not geting no invatation was probly a miss take & she says no it wasnt no miss take but you geting I was the miss take & then Grace flew up & says your sore because wear going to the dance and your not ast & then Carry & his wife & Grace & I all lost our temper & we had it hot & heavy & I guess you know Charley that we didnt get none the worst of it. so finely I told them to go home and they says you dont half to tell us to go home & whats more you wont see no more of us & I says I lived 45 yrs. & got pretty fat before I ever seen you & thats a bout all that was

said & they beat it and wear threw with them. If Mrs. Carry had of been decent we might of fixed it up for them to get ast to the next big dance only she was so sore a bout us geting a head of them that she couldnt keep her mouth shut.

I guess you can see that Mrs. Carry aint going to take care of the childern wile wear to the dance & even if she would we wouldnt let her because its 10 to 1 she would stick a knife in them or give them cloraform or some thing. and Grace will half to higher a girl from here in town to come & set in the house wile wear to the dance.

kindest regards to your self & Mary.

FRED A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Oct. 18.

DEAR Charley. well Charley I guess its pretty lucky I didnt murder some body last night & it may be a good thing I wasnt carrying my gat with me last night on acct. of it looking funny & sticking out threw the coat in my evning dress sute. I bet I would of shot some body sure & they would of had a detective up for murder for a change insted of for takeing money from stick up guys & dips. I might as well tell you what come off tho they aint no part of it Im proud of accept keeping my self from murdring some body. Grace is sick a bed over what come off & I cant talk to her a bout it & theys no use talking to the kids because they dont under stand & I got to tell it to some body so I guess your elected.

Well Charley we was figureing on getting up to the dance a bout 8 a clock but the sute I rented was to small for me & Grace had to make the pants of it biger a round the waste & then she had trouble her self geting her new close on & her hare all fixed up & evry thing & it was pretty close to 9 a clock before we got down to the opra house where they have the dances at. well we went in & a servunt told us where to put our hat & then we went up stares to where the danceing is pulled off & they was a man seting at a table out side the door & he looked at us & didnt say nothing so I went up to him & says who I was & he says aint you made a miss take.

I says I dont know if I have or not & he says if we want police protection a round here we will ask for it. I says I aint here to work but Im here to dance & he says this here is a invatation dance & I says yes & I got a invatation & he says lets see it so I halled the ticket out of my pocket & showed it to him & he says it must of been some miss take & I says why & he says because I sent out the invatations my self I and a lady did & we didnt send none to you. I says well I got 1 didnt I & he says yes but I dont know how you got it. I says well I didnt steal it & he says no I dont say you did but I know you wasnt supposed to get no invatation because you wasnt on our lists. I says well wear here any way & he says yes but if I was you I would go a long home before any body else got here because its a miss take & we will say no more a bout it.

Well I seen that Grace was ready to cry on acct. of disapointmunt so I made up my mind Id go threw with it so I says are you the only 1 thats got any thing to say a round here & he says no but Im 1 of them & I says well you get the rest of the officers to gather & see what they got to say a bout it & he says theys no body here yet but if you want to wait untill the rest of the comitty comes all right I got no objection only Im just teling you for your own good that your making a miss take & the best thing you can do is go home.

Then Grace says come lets go home & I says I wouldnt untill Id talked with the rest of the comitty & there we stood & stood & the guy didnt even say we should set down so finely I told Grace to set down & she wouldnt set down but all she could say was lets go home. Finely the peopl beggin comeing & they all starred at us tho I bet we didnt look no worse then they did & the Hamiltons come & the Carpenters & Grace whispered to me who they was & they didnt even speak to us & finely the music beggin & they all started danceing in the room in side where we couldnt see them & finely I went up to the man at the table & he says are you still here & I says you bet I am & Im in a hurry to see your commity & he says all right youll see them quick enough as soon

is the 1st. dance is over & he got up & went in the room where they was dancing & pretty soon the music stoped & he come out with 2 ladies & 3 gents with him & 1 of the gents was Carpenter.

Well the man says heres a gent that says he got a invatation to the dance & I says yes & you seen my invatation all ready. He says Yes Ill admit you had a invatation but wear going to leave it to this here comitty weather it was a miss take or not & then they wisperd to gather for a minut & then the man says its just like I told you your here threw some miss take & the best thing you can do is go home. So then I says

me to do but get her out of there but as I say if Id of had the old gat a long with me I bet Id of cut loose before I left there.

Well I pretty near had to carry Grace all the way home & put her to bed & douse camfer all over her face & I finely got her to sleep & sent the girl home that was there to take care of the childern but I couldnt go to sleep my self & I aint slept yet & I called up the chief this a m & told him the wife was sick & I couldnt come down & here it is pretty near noon & I aint even herd nothing a bout breakfast yet tho the childerns had theres because Grace remembered to give them theres but I guess she thinks Im saving up my appetite for the refreshmunts at the next dance.

A fine bunch of stiffs eh Charley.

F. A. GROSS.



The sute I rented was too small for me.

your a fine bunch of stiffs & I looked right at this here Carpenter. I says your a swell gang of stews & before I get threw with you youll all be wareing the braselits & I was going to tell them some more but just then this here Hamilton come out of the room where the dancing was at & says are we pinched & I says no but your libel to be & he says whats the excitement & Carpenter told him a bout me haveing the invatation & then it come out that Hamilton didnt get no invatation & the boy that left it to our house made a miss take & we didnt have none comeing & if it hadent of been for Grace bellowing & making a seen I would of soiled some of there collers but they was nothing for

here & I aint so stuck on it my self. But we wont sell it for less then \$1000.00 more then it costed all to gather because somebodys got to pay for whats come off & for them dancing lessons & Graces dresses & that dress sute I rent it & the shirt & shoes & all the rest of it. Grace spoke a bout moveing last night & I couldnt argue against her a bout nothing the way shes feeling these days.

I promussed I would see could I sell the place & of corse if I could sell it for cash I could pay off what I owe at the bank or if I couldnt sell it for cash the peopl that bought it off of me could asume the morgidge.

I will write & let you know how I come out.

Allison, Ill.,

Oct. 22.

DEAR Brother Charley. well Charley it looks like we would move back to the s. side if we can sell the place on acct. of Grace says she cant never spend a happy minut again out

This was Graces berth day & just as if she wasnt feeling bad enough with out what come off she got a letter in her old man's hand writing & she beggin to smile when she seen it & says pa dont never for get my berth day & shed for got her self for a minut & thot she was going to find 1 of them \$100.00 checks like he all ways sends her on her berth day but when she opened the letter insted of a check it was a reciet for \$100.00 of the money we all ready borried off of him. Well that pretty near finnishd her tho of corse you cant blame the old man tho it would of been better if he hadent wrote at all but just let it go.

I wisht I could of gave her some thing nice to make up for it but I guess you know I aint got no money to throw a way eh Charley.

Regards to Mary.

F. A. GROSS.

Allison, Ill., Nov. 1.

BROTHER Charley. Well Charley we aint going to move back to the s. side or no wheres else but wear going to stay here. I seen the real estate man to-day that sold us the place & ast him what could we get for it house & all & he named a price that wasent even what I got sunk in the place & I says youll half to come a bout a \$1000.00 higher then that & he says you aint got a chance in the world to get what you want so why dont you stay where your at. You wont find no better town no wheres.

So I told Grace I guessed wed half to stay & she says well all right & I ast

her what come over her all of a sudden & she says she had called up Mrs. Carry & told her all about the dance & Mrs. Carry talked pretty nice a bout it and the Carrys is coming over to-night to play cinch. & the Walters was out here to supper night before last & says they wisht they had a home like ourn in the subburbs insted of liveing in a dirty flat so you see Charley we aint so bad off after all & liveing out heres the best thing that could happen to the childern.

So I guess they aint no danger of us moveing for a wile.

the door bell just rung so the Carrys is here & I got to close.

best rgds. to Mary from the both of us.

FRED A. GROSS.

p s I tore this letter open again after I had it pasted up all ready. That wasent the Carrys that rung the door bell but a man & his wife name Curtis thats in the wood & coal busness out here & as nice peopl is youd want to meet. Theyd came to call on us & the Carrys come after words & we played rummy 6 hand it & they didnt go home untill a bout 10 min. a go and its pretty near 1 a clock but we wasent playing cards all the wile but part of the time we was eating refreshmunts. Grace cooked up a welch rabbit & we had some beer to go with it & I guess this here Curtis dont like his beer. Wear going over to the Curtis Mon. night & they got 1 of these here phonagrafs to dance by so I guess all that money wasent waisted eh Charley.

Régards to Mary.

Did You Read "The Prairie Wife?"

ARTHUR STRINGER, author of that exceptional novel, has just finished the best short story he has ever written.

Watch for it— "MIS' JINNY'S BOY"

BY ARTHUR STRINGER

In the June issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands May 22nd.



Schopenhauer Never Met Mrs. Johns

"HER corsets were designed by an anatomist and executed by Krupp, and her eyebrows came in a little silver-encased stick," but she had "a way with her."

By Frank R. Adams

"MRS. JOHNS, our friend, Professor English." My wife made the introduction casually, just as if the entire dinner had not been planned for their meeting.

"Both contestants are members of this club," I murmured under my breath. "Seconds, leave the ring."

"I am pleased to know you at last," Mrs. Johns acknowledged.

"Why?" My friend Phil English has no patience with the small coins of conversation. If anyone says anything he wants him to have a reason for saying it.

"Because I've heard so much about you."

"Oh."

"I've heard that you are terribly rude

ILLUSTRATED
BY R. F. JAMES

to people, and I wanted to know if it was true.

"You need not go far to find out. I assure you that I am. Everybody knows it."

The plot was Molly's. Ever since she married me, she has been itching to get my old friend Phil English into a matrimonial snarl. Persis Johns was Molly's trump card, and this dinner at our house was equivalent to leading the ace.

Phil English was not a woman-hater, but he absolutely refused to do them homage.

"Dammit, Jim," he had often said to me, "they aren't any different from us. Why should we make idols of 'em? They claim they want equality. I'm in favor of giving it to 'em."

What Phil hasn't thought out for himself on the subject of woman he has assimilated from the German philosophers. He is all theory and not much practice, and almost anybody will admit that the laboratory method is the only reliable way of studying the genus *mulier*. But my idea is that each man should study just as many specimens as he is able to before he becomes a martyr to investigation and goes to that land from out whose bourne no bachelor ever returns.

About the time that youths ordinarily begin to wake up to the fact that the skirted half of the race is handy to take around to dances and to sit on grandstands and cheer, Phil chanced to read Schopenhauer. The logic appealed to his scientific mind, and he accepted the dictum of the famous misogynist without argument. He had reached the serene age of thirty-five secure in the belief that he knew all about women and, knowing all, was better off a bachelor.

Phil was a very vital sort of man, all six feet of him and several inches over. He never cared much about how he looked, and neither did anyone else. His personality overpowered whatever clothes he wore, anyway. Men liked him, and he fascinated women. I think that in their hearts they hated him, but his indifference piqued their curiosity.

His attitude had always annoyed Molly. She seemed to think it her duty to break down his colossal reserve. To this end she had literally thrown all her girl friends at his head. Some of them were sweet, simple minded girls who never had a designing thought in their heads,—not a thought of any kind in fact,—but Phil had professed to see in them veritable scheming vampires, and he had shied at them like a frightened horse.

The idea of introducing him to Mrs. Johns, as I have said, was entirely my wife's. I pointed out the folly of it when she suggested it.

"Persis is a good scout," I admitted, "but she isn't exactly young, you know."

"Only thirty-four," interrupted Molly.

I was going to point out that thirty-four is fairly mature when I happened

to think that Molly is thirty-three herself, so I refrained.

"Anyway,"—shifting my base hastily,—
"Persis is everything that Phil detests. She makes up to beat the band, and she hasn't any mind to speak of. It will only mean one more of your friends with a damaged set of feelings."

Anyhow, Molly had her way. My part of the scheme was to lure Phil to the dinner.

He growled when I mentioned it to him at the Campus Club. "Molly has set her heart on it," I urged.

He looked at me suspiciously.

"Why do I fascinate that wife of yours, Jim?" he asked suddenly. "You don't think that—"

"No I don't, you idiot. She merely thinks you're a curiosity. She doesn't realize that you are really merely a simple-minded egotist, and so she wants to study you."

"I suppose it's all right," he admitted reluctantly. "I'll come if you will place me on your left so I can talk to you whenever I get where I need help."

I agreed and Phil came.

Whenever he gets on evening clothes and has his hair brushed by the barber I wonder more and more how he has escaped the fate he fears. He is not as handsome as a great many I know, but when he enters a room you know there is a man there.

I fancied that I saw Phil's eye light up with enthusiasm as Persis was introduced to him as Mrs. Johns. He approved more heartily of married women than he did of the other kind. I suppose he regarded them as less dangerous, although why I don't know. Literature teaches us quite the contrary.

It may have been for other reasons that Phil seemed to take to Persis so readily. Even I, who viewed her from the coign of vantage of a married man and knew how artificial she was, admit that the general effect was superb. I suspect that her corsets were designed by an anatomist and executed by Krupp, and I know that her kind of eyebrows come in a little silver-encased stick and that her complexion was the result of hours of massage and skillful high-lighting. But what a stunning result!

Still, Phil knew all about the way such effects were produced, and surely he, who had passed by all the youngsters of eighteen and twenty to whom Molly had introduced him, would see through this woman who preserved her charm solely by a relentless fight with nature and time.

As I promised,—I had arranged it with Molly after an argument,—Phil sat at my left. It was for that reason that I heard fragments of their conversation.

"Has it ever occurred to you," Persis was saying as we sat down, probably in answer to some remark of his, "that nearly everything a man does is a pose to attract the attention of women? Even the male individual who professes to despise the mental equipment of the opposite sex is in reality using a mere weapon of woman's own sort in order to pique her curiosity."

I had heard of the advisability of getting in the first blow in a fight. So had Persis.

"Nonsense," retorted Phil, too astonished for the moment to counter skillfully. "I am the sort of a man you describe. I understand the nature of women, and I don't hesitate to tell them so, but I assure you I don't do it to attract their attention."

"But you do attract them."

"How do you know?"

"You attracted me."

"Madam, are you an intellectual woman?" Phil turned and surveyed her curiously.

"Do you think so, merely because I said you attracted me? Heaven forbid!" She smiled at him with her eyes in the provoking way women have which is nearly an insult. "Do I look intellectual?"

"No," he snorted.

"Thank you. If I did, I should have to hire a masseuse. I am thirty-four years old, and no woman of that age can afford to be intellectual unless she has given up hope anyway."

They say that a woman who will tell her age will tell anything. Persis had stepped into the arena of truth.

Phil finished his searching survey of her perfect job of modern beautifying.

"Mrs. Johns," he declared, "you are the first woman I ever met who did not care to sail under false colors."

You can see the system for yourself. It is the method of financiers. First establish your credit by some overt act of honesty and then trade upon your reputation to do anything you want to afterwards.

"Of course marriage is a good thing as an institution," was the next remark of Persis' that drifted my way. "The conspicuous failures are due to individual mistakes."

"It is all right physiologically," he admitted, "and I suppose every man owes it to the state to take care of at least one woman."

"The worst mistakes are made by the men." She ignored his scientific and economic interruption. "They expect too much. Before a man marries he is usually under the firm conviction that black is some entirely different color."

"Absurd," he broke in impatiently. "Men are thinking creatures, and they are not so easily deceived as you suppose."

"Possibly not," she mused, "but I am willing to put it to some sort of test. Suppose you tell me what color you think my eyes are."

The amazing affrontery of her! She turned her face toward him and submitted to the most searching scrutiny that an eye accustomed to microscopic examinations could give it. Even I, without being in the least a scientific observer, could detect the patent traces of the eyebrow pencil and mascaro.

She turned back to her plate.

"Well?" she inquired.

He sighed as one who has been wrenched away from an engrossing novel or a fascinating picture.

"Well what?"

"What color are they?"

He thought painfully for a moment.

"I'm afraid," he confessed, "that I don't remember. I'll have to look again."

She laughed.

How absurd to try those school-girl tricks on Phil! It was nonsense to use such primitive ammunition. I always suspected Persis of being not particularly wise. Now I was sure of it. I



It was all school-girl stuff, but the poor fool fell for it. Together they stood over her china cabinet while she explained in thrilling tones the romantic history of the different pieces which formed her modest collection.

rather feared that Phil would denounce her then and there, but he held himself in admirable restraint.

I did not see Phil alone that evening, but he stopped me the next day on the campus.

"Very charming woman, Mrs. Johns," he said. "Quite an unusual woman. More inclined to be frank and honest than most of them."

I stared at him in amazement. "What's the matter, Phil? You aren't going to change your theories, are you?"

"Lord no," he returned. "This woman is merely an exception that proves the rule. I feel perfectly safe in admiring her, as she is a married woman."

"Oh, I see," I interjected cautiously.

"Her husband is still living, of course?" he questioned in anxious haste, seized by the sudden thought that possibly he was not as secure as he had suspected.

"Yes," I admitted.

"I am glad I thought to ask you, because I said I would call at her house this afternoon."

It was with some misgivings that I let him go without warning him further. I doubt if he would have paid any attention to me if I had. Phil was old enough to take care of himself, and besides, he knew all that Schopenhauer did about women.

But then, Schopenhauer had never met Mrs. Johns.

What occurred at Mrs. Johns' apartment when he called filtered through to me from the lady herself via Molly. It seems that when he came she had done herself up in a dull black afternoon dress which makes her arms and neck look especially lovely. Then, as a preliminary to the scientific discussion which she had urged him to continue with her from the evening before, she played for him one of the Chopin nocturnes on the piano.

Anyone will admit that this is the proper way to open up a scientific discussion with a woman in her own home where she has arranged the lights to her best advantage. It was criminal conspiracy, and as such should have been punished by law.

She began the conversation. "Now

tell me about your theory of the existence of sex life in the microcosm."

"Oh yes," replied Phil vaguely, his eyes fascinated with the grace of the fingers which had drawn the plaintive melody from the piano and now lay clasped idly in her lap.

"Or if you would rather," she said, rising gracefully, "I will show you my collection of Chinese jade. I suppose your mind must get terribly tired of science after you have dealt with it all day. Probably you prefer to rest yourself by seeing something which I consider beautiful."

It was all school-girl stuff, but the poor fool fell for it. They stood over her china cabinet side by side while she explained in thrilling tones the romantic history of the different pieces which formed her modest collection.

He didn't know a word she said, because her voice and her presence had awakened in him such an uproarious discord of unused emotions that all outside sounds were indistinct.

She was a distracting picture. She admitted it herself when she was telling Molly about it. Black is her most becoming color and accentuates the slimness of her perfectly matured figure. Then, too, she was at her best handling the curious china and ornaments. The atmosphere of mystery that surrounded the Oriental pieces enveloped herself. The witchery crept into his soul and stole his mind away.

He even went so far as to tell her that she was more beautiful than the jade she was exhibiting. Immediately after he had said it he blushed and apologized just as if that were not the declaration she had been angling for ever since she first met him.

This sort of thing went on for a week. Phil called nearly every day, and at other times they met at dinners.

Then suddenly his attentions ceased. He gruffly refused to visit further at her house and closeted himself in his laboratory and declined other invitations.

Persis Johns was worried and called to see my wife about it. They were discussing the matter when I came home.

"What do you think is the matter with Professor English, Jim?" Molly

asked after they had explained the situation.

"The matter of course is," I said oracularly, "that Phil has tumbled to the whole plot. You may be able to deceive a man with his turn of mind for a few days, but not for long. What happened the last time you saw him?"

Persis blushed.

"He kissed my hand," she admitted reluctantly.

"Well, wasn't that what you wanted?" I asked crossly. "You have made a fool out of him. Why not let him rest in peace now? Do you want him to come out publicly and acknowledge what has been done to him?"

"No."

"Then what do you want?"

"I want him back. In trying to prove that he was a fool I found out that I was very foolish myself."

My heart glowed with conscious pride in my sex. After all, the victory lay on our side. I wondered if Phil had stumbled by accident upon the psychological moment to quit or if he had done it deliberately.

I determined to find out.

I did not happen to meet him for several days, however, and in the meantime the spring term of college came to an end. In the interim before the summer session began, I took Molly to Schlessingerville on Silver Lake, a summer resort of modest pretensions where we had spent several vacations before.

After I had safely installed her there with Mrs. Johns, who had elected to patronize the same hotel, I returned to the university to take up my duties in the History department. Being a temporary bachelor, I made my headquarters for meals at the Campus Club.

There one afternoon I met Phil English lunching late in gloomy solitude. I dropped into a seat opposite at his table. I mentioned casually that I had just returned from Silver Lake, where the ladies were going to stay for several weeks. His eye lighted up for a moment when I spoke of Mrs. Johns, but only for a moment, and then the gleam of interest or anger, whichever it was, subsided to a look of gloomy despair.

"By the way, Phil," I said haltingly,

"I wanted to talk with you about Mrs. Johns."

At the mention of her name he abandoned the chop he was mutilating on his plate and scowled at me.

"Do you?" he retorted ungraciously. "I don't."

"I don't blame you a bit," I replied. "She is a designing woman."

"Jim," he declared hotly, "will you stop defaming a person who is too—too sweet for this world, or shall I punch your head?"

"I'll stop," I retreated mentally. "Although I don't understand you. I've often heard you say worse things about the sex yourself."

"Mrs. Johns," he announced loudly to the entire room, "is an exception."

"Oh, she is!" I sneered. "I suppose you mean she wouldn't deceive a man if she got a chance?"

He growled inarticulately at me.

"I'll tell you something," I went on, moved to defend myself. "The dinner where you met her was all a plot, and she was a party to it. It was a deliberate scheme to break down your theories and have you fall in love with her."

"Nonsense," he retorted, at last regaining his voice. "Why should she, a married woman, want to attract me?"

"To marry you, you poor weak-minded idiot."

"But her husband—you yourself told me her husband was living."

"He is, I guess, but she has been divorced from him for ten years."

A hoarse growl came from my giant friend. With his exclamation he had risen from the table and knocked his chair over backwards.

"Divorced," he was saying, "divorced and I didn't know it!"

He started to leave the dining-room and then stopped to shout back at me, "When is the next train for Silver Lake?"

I hastily consulted a vest-pocket timetable which the railroad obligingly furnishes to its commuting patrons.

"There's a train in just an hour."

"An hour!" he howled. "Hang the railroad. I can't wait that long."

"What are you going to do?"

"Take a taxi," he retorted, shoulder-



"What do you intend to do?" I asked. "Do?" he shouted. "I'm going to find that woman."

ing through the doors outside, where a motor cab was always to be found.

"Do you know the road to Silver Lake?" he demanded of the driver.

"Yes, sir," the chauffeur responded promptly. "It's a straightaway road and good all but about ten miles before you get there."

"O. K.," exclaimed my friend, vaulting in and slamming the door. "On your way."

While the driver was cranking the car I was torn by conflicting emotions. What ought I to do? How could I stay this madman?

"What do you intend to do?" I asked at last.

"Do?" he shouted. "I'm going to find that woman."

With a lurch the car started, and I was left with other questions unspoken.

My peace of mind was permanently wrecked, however. What was my duty in the matter? He obviously intended to wreak some kind of vengeance on Persis Johns for her deceit. I worried about it for half an hour, and the longer I thought, the worse my imagination pictured the situation. He had a fearful temper, and in a moment of rage he might forget himself.

At last I decided to telephone. I put in a long distance call for my wife. It took me fifteen minutes to find out that Molly was not in.

I looked at my watch. It was nearly time for the express to Silver Lake. If I could catch it, I might get there before Phil in his taxicab. The chauffeur had spoken of a bad stretch of road on the way, and he might be detained.

IN the smoking-car, where I consumed twenty cigarettes, I sat forward on the edge of my seat as if by so doing I could urge the train to greater speed. After an interminable period we arrived. I fairly ran to the hotel.

I went immediately to Mrs. Johns' room without waiting to be announced.

Thank heaven, she was in. Molly was there too.

They both looked at me in amazement as I burst in through the door. Persis was sitting at her dressing-table with her hair down, brushing it. She had on

some sort of a kimono business, and I judged that she was dressing for dinner. Molly was already in modest décolleté.

"Has he got here yet? Have you seen him?" I panted.

"Who?"

"Phil."

"No," Molly answered.

"Is he coming?" Persis clapped her hands joyfully. "I'm so glad."

"You won't be when he finds you. You must get away somewhere quick before he gets here. He has found out everything, and I have nearly broken my neck to warn you."

"Found out everything?" Persis questioned. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, about the scheme to disprove his theories and everything. I apologized to him to-day for my part in it, and he went wild; apparently he didn't know he had been fooled until I told him. He didn't even know that you were divorced. We must all get away before he gets here, and we haven't a second to spare. He's coming in a taxi."

"Wait a minute," Persis halted my wife and me at the door. "Let me understand this. You say he didn't know before to-day that I was divorced? Did he ever ask you anything about it?"

I recalled with difficulty my previous conversation with Phil. "I think he asked me once if your husband was living?"

"What did you say?"

"I said he was. He is, isn't he?"

Persis disregarded my inquiry and went on asking questions herself. "And what was it he said when you told him that I wasn't married now?"

"I remember his exact words," I replied, for indeed they were indelibly stamped on my memory. "When he jumped into the taxi I asked what he intended to do, and he said, 'I'm going to find that woman.'"

Persis smiled as if some one had presented her with a dish of cream—you know how a cat grins.

"Molly," she said, slowly indicating me impersonally, "please kiss every darling bone in his head for me."

"Hurry," I insisted, not paying much attention. "He may kill you."

"I'll take a chance," said Persis slowly. "Besides, it is too late."

It was. Down the corridor came the tramp of heavy feet hurrying as if in a charge.

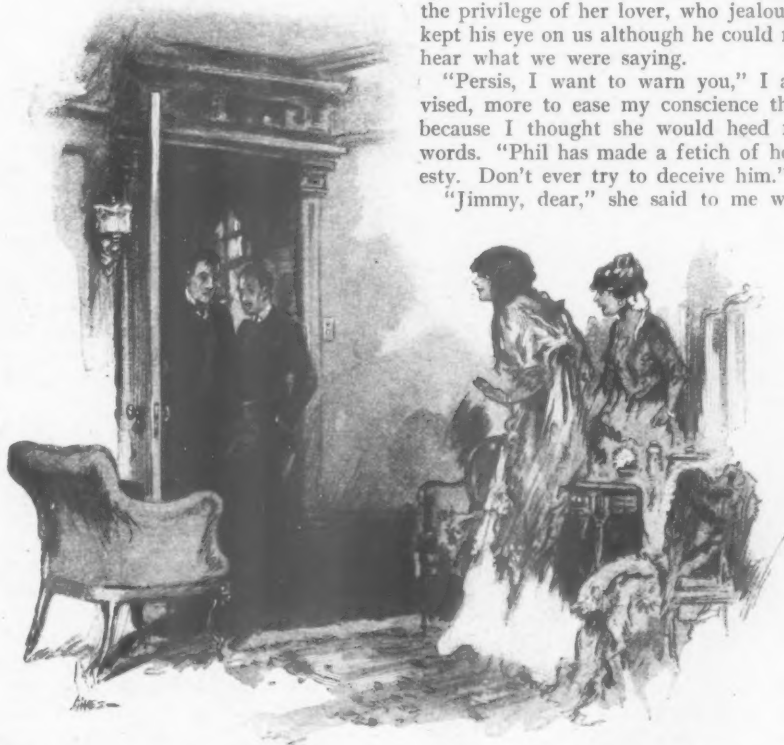
I jumped for the door to lock it. As I turned the key the door was thrown violently open, and Phil, who apparently

I looked at her, bewildered. She motioned toward the door. We tip-toed out, although I think our caution was entirely unnecessary. I doubt if a naval battle would have disturbed them.

When Persis came down to dinner, radiant with a beauty that really did not need the adornment she had placed upon it, I took her aside, after asking the privilege of her lover, who jealously kept his eye on us although he could not hear what we were saying.

"Persis, I want to warn you," I advised, more to ease my conscience than because I thought she would heed my words. "Phil has made a fetch of honesty. Don't ever try to deceive him."

"Jimmy, dear," she said to me with



Phil, who apparently did not notice that I was there, strode into the room. "Phil," I exclaimed, "think before you act. You'll be sorry for this."

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"Phil," I exclaimed, "think before you act. You'll be sorry for this."

He did not stop. He went straight to Persis, and as he came to her she rose and gazed fearlessly into his eyes.

Without a word he swept her into his arms, loose hair, kimono and all.

I stood stupefied.

Finally I was aware that Molly was pulling at my hand.

a burden of loving tenderness in her voice that exists only in a woman supremely happy, "Phil wants to be deceived and I'm going to do it. He has dealt with the truth so much that he has never had any fun. No woman could ever be as really attractive as I am going to make him think I am."

When she had gone back to him I stood for a moment wondering if she were right. When she said his name there had been a bright tear in her eye.

The Edge of the

By Melville Davisson Post

Author of the "Randolph Mason," stories, the "Uncle Abner" stories, etc.

THERE is no better reading than an "Uncle Abner" story. It is the highest form of short story: no preliminary backing and filling, no hesitation, but a plunge straight into the heart of a dramatic situation, quick strokes, dialogue with real thought behind it—and the end before you expect it. This story is laid in the days just before the Civil War, when feeling about slavery was at white heat, and it shows the deductive methods of Uncle Abner at their best.

IT was a land of strange varieties of courage. But, even in the great hills, I never saw a man like Cyrus Mansfield. He was old and dying when this ghastly adventure happened; but, even in the extremity of life, with its terrors on him, he met the thing with his pagan notions of the public welfare, and it is for his own gods to judge him.

IT was a long afternoon of autumn.

The dead man lay in the white-washed cabin staring up at the cob-webbed ceiling. His left cheek below the eye was burned with the brand of a pistol shot. The track of a bullet ran along the eyebrow, plowing into the skull above the ear. His grizzled hair stood up like a brush, and the fanaticism of his face was exaggerated by the strained postures of death.

A tall, gaunt woman sat by the door

in the sun. She had a lapful of honey locust, and she worked at that, putting the pieces together in a sort of wreath. The branches were full of thorns, and the inside of the woman's hand was torn and wounded upon the balls of the fingers and the palm, but she plaited the thorns together, giving no heed to her injured hand.

She did not get up when my Uncle Abner and Squire Randolph entered. She sat over her work with imperturbable stoicism.

The man and woman were strangers in the land, preëmpting one of Mansfield's cabins. Their mission was a mystery for conjecture. And now the man's death was a mystery beyond it.

When Randolph inquired how the man had met his death, the woman got up, without a word, went to a



Shadow

ILLUSTRATED
BY WILLIAM
OBERHARDT



It was a handsome dueling pistol, with an inlaid silver stock.

cupboard in the wall, took out a dueling pistol, and handed it to him. Then, she spoke in a dreary voice:

"He was mad. 'The cause,' he said, 'must have a sacrifice of blood.'"

She looked steadily at the dead man.

"Ah, yes," she added, "he was mad!"

Then she turned about and went back to her chair in the sun before the door.

Randolph and Abner examined the weapon. It was a handsome dueling pistol, with an inlaid silver stock and

a long, octagon barrel of hard, sharp-edged steel. It had been lately fired, for the exploded percussion cap was still on the nipple.

"He was a poor shot," said Randolph; "he very nearly missed."

My uncle looked closely at the dead man's wound and the burned cheek beneath it. He turned the weapon slowly in his hand, but Randolph was impatient.

"Well, Abner," he said, "did the pistol kill him, or was it the finger of God?"

"The pistol killed him," replied my uncle.

"And shall we believe the woman, eh, Abner?"

"I am willing to believe her," replied my uncle.

They looked about the cabin. There was blood on the floor and flecked against the wall, and stains on the barrel of the pistol, as though the man had staggered about, stunned by the bullet, before he died. And so the wound looked—not mortal on the instant, but one from which, after some time, a man might die.

Randolph wrote down his memorandum, and the two went out into the road.

IT was an afternoon of Paradise. The road ran in a long, endless ribbon westward toward the Ohio. Negroes in the wide bottom land were harvesting the corn and setting it up in great bulging shocks tied with grapevine. Beyond, on a high wooded knoll, stood a mansion-house with white pillars.

My uncle took the dueling pistol out of his pocket and handed it to the Justice of the Peace.

"Randolph," he said, "these weapons were made in pairs; there should be another. And," he added, "there is a crest on the butt plate."

"Virginia is full of such fol-de-rol," replied the Justice, "and bought and sold, pledged and traded. It would not serve to identify the dead man. And besides, Abner, why do we care? He is dead by his own hand; his rights and his injuries touch no other; let him lie with his secrets."

He made a little circling gesture upward with his index finger.

"'Duncan is dead,'" he quoted. "'After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.' Shall we pay our respects to Mansfield before we ride away?"

And he indicated the house like a white cornice on the high cliff above them.

They had been standing with their backs to the cabin door. Now the woman passed them. She wore a calico sunbonnet, and carried a little bundle tied up in a cotton handkerchief. She set out westward along the road toward the Ohio. She walked slowly, like one bound on an interminable journey.

Moved by some impulse they looked in at the cabin door. The dead man lay as he had been, his face turned toward the ceiling, his hands grotesquely crossed, his body rigid. But now the sprigs of honey locust, at which the woman worked, were pressed down on his unkempt grizzled hair. The sun lay on the floor, and there was silence.

They left the cabin with no word and climbed the long path to the mansion on the hill.

MANSFIELD sat in a great chair on the pillared porch. It was wide and cool, paved with colored tiles carried over from England in a sailing ship.

He was the strangest man I have ever seen. He was old and dying then, but he had a spirit in him that no event could bludgeon into servility. He sat with a gray shawl pinned around his shoulders. The lights and shadows of the afternoon fell on his jaw like a plowshare, on his big, crooked, bony nose, on his hard gray eyes, bringing them into relief against the lines and furrows of his face.

"Mansfield," cried Randolph, "how do you do?"

"I still live," replied the old man, "but at any hour I may be ejected out of life."

"We all live, Mansfield," said my uncle, "as long as God wills."

"Now, Abner," cried the old man, "you repeat the jargon of the churches. The will of man is the only power in the



"He is dead," said Mansfield, thrusting out his plowshare jaw, "as all such vermin ought to be. We are too careless in the South of these vicious reptiles. We ought to stamp them out of life whenever we find them."

universe, so far as we can find out, that is able to direct the movings of events. Nothing else that exists can make the most trivial thing happen or cease to happen. No imagined god or demon in all the history of the race has ever influenced the order of events as much as the feeblest human creature in an hour of life. Sit down, Abner, and let me tell you the truth before I cease to exist, as the beasts of the field cease."

He indicated the great carved oak chairs about him, and the two visitors sat down.

Randolph loved the vanities of argument, and he thrust in:

"I am afraid, Mansfield," he said, "you will never enjoy the pleasures of Paradise."

The old man made a contemptuous gesture.

"Pleasure, Randolph," he said, "is the happiness of little men; big men are after something more. They are after the satisfaction that comes from directing events. This is the only happiness: To crush out every other authority—to be the one dominating authority—to make events take the avenue one likes. This is the happiness of the god of the universe, if there is any god of the universe."

He moved in his chair, his elbows out, his fingers extended, his bony face uplifted.

"Abner," he cried, "I am willing for you to endure life as you find it and say it is the will of God, but, as for me, I will not be cowed into submission. I will not be held back from laying hold of the lever of the great engine merely because the rumble of the machinery fills other men with terror."

"Mansfield," replied my uncle, in his deep, level voice, "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."

The old man moved his extended arms with a powerful threshing motion, like a vulture beating the air with its great wings.

"Fear!" he cried. "Why, Abner, fear is the last clutch of the animal clinging to the intelligence of man as it emerges from the instinct of the beast. The first man thought the monsters about him were gods. Our fathers thought the

elements were gods, and we think the impulse moving the machinery of the world is the will of some divine authority. And always the only thing in the universe that was superior to these things has been afraid to assert itself. The human will that can change things, that can do as it likes, has been afraid of phantasms that never yet met with anything they could turn aside."

He clenched his hands, contracted his elbows, and brought them down with an abrupt derisive gesture.

"I do not understand," he said, "but I am not afraid. I will not be beaten into submission by vague, inherited terrors. I will not be subservient to things that have a lesser power than I have. I will not yield the control of events to elements that are dead, to laws that are unthinking, or to an influence that cannot change."

"Not all the gods that man has ever worshiped can make things happen tomorrow, but I can make them happen; therefore, I am a god above them. And how shall a god that is greater than these gods give over the dominion of events into their hands?"

"And so, Mansfield," said Abner, "you have been acting just now upon this belief?"

THE old man turned his bony face sharply on my uncle.

"Now, Abner," he said, "what do you mean by this Delphic sentence?"

For reply, my uncle extended his arm toward the whitewashed cabin.

"Who is the dead man down there?"

"Randolph can tell you that," said Mansfield.

"I never saw the man until to-day," replied the Justice.

"Eh, Randolph," cried the old man, "do you administer the law and have a memory like that? In midsummer the justices sat at the county seat. Have you forgot that inquisition?"

"I have not," said the Justice. "It was a fool's inquiry. One of Nixon's negro women reported a slave plot to poison the wells and attack the people with a curious weapon. She got the description of the weapon out of some preacher's sermon—a kind of spear. If

she had named some implement of modern warfare, we could have better credited her story."

"Well, Randolph," cried the old man, "for all the wisdom of your justices, she spoke the truth. They were pikes the woman saw, and not the spears of the horsemen of Israel. Did you notice a stranger who remained in a corner of the court-room while the justices were sitting? He disappeared after the trial. But did you mark him, Randolph? He lies dead down yonder in my negro cabin?"

A light came into the face of the Justice.

"By the Eternal," he cried, "an abolitionist!"

He flipped the gold seals on his watch fob; then he added, with that little circling gesture of his finger:

"Well, he has taken himself away with his own hands."

"He is dead," said Mansfield, thrusting out his plowshare jaw, "as all such vermin ought to be. We are too careless in the South of these vicious reptiles. We ought to stamp them out of life whenever we find them. They are a menace to the peace of the land. They incite the slaves to arson and to murder. They are beyond the law, as the panther and the wolf are. We ought to have the courage to destroy the creatures."

"The destiny of this republic," he added, "is in our hands."

My uncle Abner spoke then:

"It is in God's hands," he said.

"God!" cried Mansfield. "I would not give house-room to such a god! When we dawdle, Abner, the Yankees always beat us. Why, man, if this thing runs on, it will wind up in a lawsuit. We shall be stripped of our property by a court's writ. And instead of imposing our will on this republic, we shall be answering a little New England lawyer with rejoinders and rebuttals."

"Would the bayonet be a better answer?" said my uncle.

"Now, Abner," said Mansfield, "you amuse me. These Yankees have no stomach for the bayonet. They are traders, Abner; they handle the shears and the steel-yard."

My uncle looked steadily at the man.

"Virginia held that opinion of New England when the King's troops landed," he said. "It was a common belief. Why, sir, even Washington riding north to the command of the Colonial army, when he heard of the battle of Bunker Hill, did not ask who had won; his only inquiry was, 'Did the militia of Massachusetts fight?' It did fight, Mansfield, with immortal courage!"

MY uncle Abner lifted his face and looked out over the great valley, mellow with its ripened corn. His voice fell into a reflective note.

"The situation in this republic," he said, "is grave, and I am full of fear. In God's hands the thing would finally adjust itself. In God's slow, devious way it would finally come out all right. But neither you, Mansfield, nor the abolitionist, will leave the thing to God. You will rush in and settle it with violence. You will find a short cut of your own through God's deliberate way, and I tremble before the horror of blood that you would plunge us into."

He paused again, and his big, bronzed features had the serenity of some vast belief.

"To be fair," he said, "everywhere in this republic, to enforce the law everywhere, to put down violence, to try every man who takes the law in his own hand, fairly in the courts, and, if he is guilty, punish him without fear or favor, according to the letter of the statute, to keep everywhere a public sentiment of fair dealing, by an administration of justice above all public clamor—in this time of heat, this is our only hope of peace!"

He spoke in his deep, level voice, and the words seemed to be concrete things having dimensions and weight.

"Shall a fanatic who stirs up our slaves to murder," said Mansfield, "be tried like a gentleman before a jury?"

"Aye, Mansfield," replied my uncle, "like a gentleman, and before a jury! If the fanatic murders the citizen, I would hang him, and if the citizen murders the fanatic, I would hang him too, without one finger's weight of difference in the method of procedure. I would show New England that the justice of



"And so, I sat here, while the creature ranted with my pistol in his hand. I called out the time, and he harangued me: 'The black of the negro shall be washed white with blood!' And I answered him: 'One minute, sir!' 'The Lord will make Virginia a possession for the bitter!' was his second climax, and I replied, 'Two minutes of your time are up!'"

Virginia is even-eyed. And she would emulate that fairness, and all over the land the law would hold against the unrestraint that is gathering."

"Abner," cried Mansfield, "you are a dawdler like your god. I know a swifter way."

"I am ready to believe it," replied my uncle. "Who killed the mad abolitionist down yonder?"

"Who cares," said the old man, "since the beast is dead?"

"I care," replied Abner.

"Then, find it out, Abner, if you care,"

said the old man, snapping his jaws.

"I have found it out," said my uncle, "and it has happened in so strange a way, and with so curious an intervention, that I cannot save the State from shame."

"It happened in the simplest way imaginable," said Randolph: "The fool killed himself."

It was not an unthinkable conclusion. The whole land was wrought up to the highest tension. Men were beginning to hold their proper ties and their lives as of little account in this tremendous issue. The country was ready to flare up in a war, and to fire it the life of one man would be nothing. A thousand madmen were ready to make that sacrifice of life. That a fanatic would shoot himself in Virginia with the idea that the slave owners would be charged by the country with his murder and so the war brought on, was not a thing improbable in that day's extremity of passion.

To the madman it would be only the slight sacrifice of his life for the immortal gain of a holy war.

My uncle looked at the Justice with a curious smile.

"I think Mansfield will hardly believe that," he said.

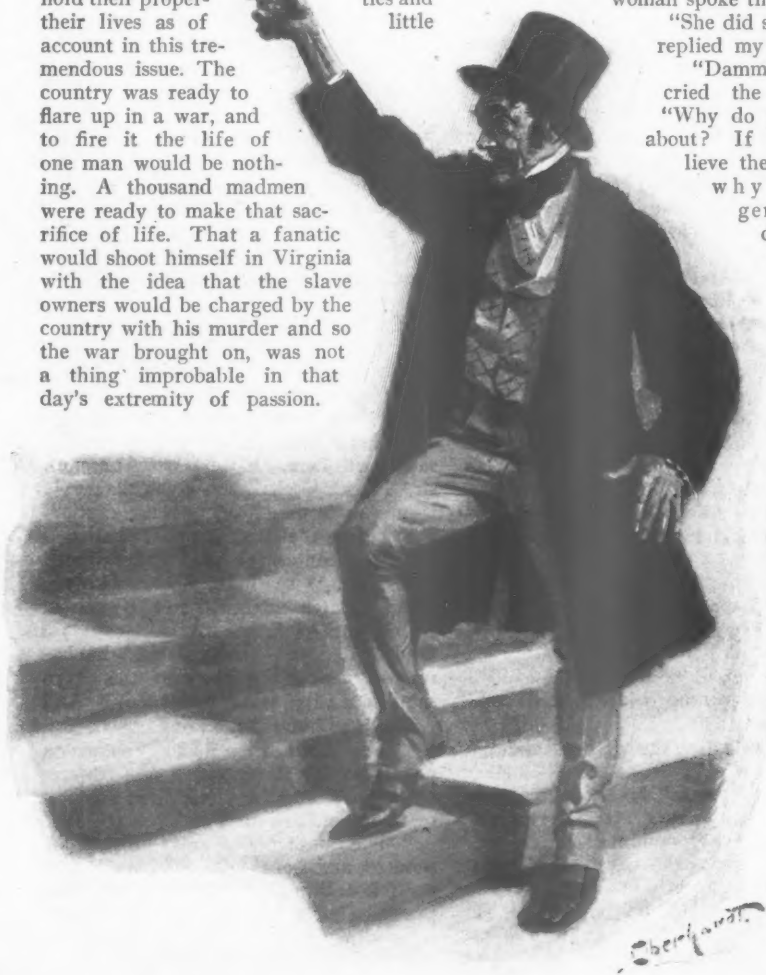
The old man laughed.

"It is a pretty explanation, Randolph," he said, "and I commend it to all men, but I do not believe it."

"Not believe it!" cried the Justice, looking first at my uncle and then at the old man. "Why, Abner, you said the woman spoke the truth!"

"She did speak it," replied my uncle.

"Damme, man!" cried the Justice. "Why do you beat about? If you believe the woman, why do you gentlemen disbelieve my con-



clusion on her words? Pray enlighten me!"

"I disbelieve it, Randolph," replied my uncle, "for the convincing reason that I know who killed him."

"And I," cried Mansfield, "disbelieve it for a convincing reason—for the most convincing reason in the world, Randolph,"—and his big voice laughed in among the pillars and rafters of his porch,—"because I killed him myself!"

ABNER sat unmoving, and Randolph like a man past belief. The Justice fumbled with the pistol in his pocket, got it out, and laid it on the flat arm on his chair, but he did not speak. The confession overwhelmed him.

The old man stood up, and the voice in his time-shaken body was Homeric:

"Ho! Ho!" he cried. "And so you thought I would be afraid, Randolph, and dodge about like your little men, shaken and overcome by fear." And he huddled in his shawl with a dramatic gesture.

"Fear!" And his laugh burst out again in a high staccato. "Even the devils in Abner's Christian hell lack that! I shot the creature, Randolph! Do you hear the awful words? And do you tremble for me, lest I hang and go to Abner's hell?"

The mock terror in the old man's voice and manner was compelling drama. He indicated the pistol on the chair-arm.

"Yes," he said, "it is mine. Abner should have known it by the Mansfield arms."

"I did know it," replied my uncle.

The old man looked at the Justice with a queer ironical smile; then he went into the house.

"Await me, Randolph," he said. "I would produce the evidence and make out your case."

And prodded by the words, Randolph cursed bitterly.

"By the Eternal," he cried. "I am as little afraid as any of God's creatures, but the man confounds me!"

And he spoke the truth. He was a justice of the peace in Virginia when only gentlemen could hold that office. He lacked the balance and the ability of his pioneer ancestors, and he was given

over to the vanity and the extravagance of words, but fear and all the manifestations of fear were alien to him.

He turned when the old man came out with a rosewood box in his hand, and faced him calmly.

"Mansfield," he said, "I warn you. I represent the law, and if you have done a murder, I will get you hanged."

The old man paused, and looked at Randolph with his maddening ironical smile.

"Fear again, eh, Randolph!" he said. "Is it by fear that you would always restrain me? Shall I be plucked back from this gibbet and Abner's hell only by this fear? It is a menace I have too long disregarded. You must give me a better reason."

MANSFIELD opened the rosewood box and took out a pistol like the one on the arm of Randolph's chair. He held the weapon lightly in his hand.

"The creature came here to harangue me," he said, "and like the genie in the copper pot, I gave him his choice of deaths."

He laughed, for the fancy pleased him.

"In the swirl of his heroics, Abner, I carried him the pistol yonder, to the steps of my portico where he stood, and with this other and my father's watch, I sat down here. 'After three minutes, sir,' I said, 'I shall shoot you down. It is my price for hearing your oration. Fire before that time is up. I shall call out the minutes for your convenience.'

"And so, I sat here, Abner, with my father's watch, while the creature ranted with my pistol in his hand.

"I called out the time, and he harangued me: 'The black of the negro shall be washed white with blood!' And I answered him: 'One minute, sir!'"

"The Lord will make Virginia a possession for the bitter!" was his second climax, and I replied, 'Two minutes of your time are up!'"

"The South is one great brothel," he shouted, and I answered, 'Three minutes, my fine fellow,' and shot him as I had promised! He leaped off into the darkness with my unfired pistol and fled to the cabin where you found him."

THERE was a moment's silence, and my uncle put out his arm and pointed down across the long meadow to a grim outline traveling far off on the road.

"Mansfield," he said, "you have lighted the powder train that God, at His leisure, would have dampened. You have broken the faith of the world in our sincerity. Virginia will be credited with this man's death, and we cannot hang you for it!"

"And why not?" cried Randolph, standing up. He had been prodded into unmanageable anger. "The Commonwealth has granted no letters of marque; it has proclaimed no outlawry. Neither Mansfield nor any other has a patent to do murder. I shall get him hanged!"

My uncle shook his head.

"No, Randolph," he said, "you cannot hang him."

"And why not?" cried the Justice of the Peace, aroused now, and defiant. "Is Mansfield above the law? If he kills this madman, shall he have a writ of exemption for it?"

"But he did not kill him!" replied my uncle.

Randolph was amazed. And Mansfield shook his head slowly, his face retaining its ironical smile.

"No, Abner," he said, "let Randolph have his case. I shot him."

Then he put out his hand, as though in courtesy, to my uncle. "Be at peace," he said. "If I were moved by fear, there is a greater near me than Randolph's gibbet. I shall be dead and buried before his grand jury can hold its inquisition."

"Mansfield," replied my uncle, "be yourself at peace, for you did not kill him."

"Not kill him!" cried the man. "I shot him thus!"

He sat down in his chair and taking the pistol out of the rosewood box, leveled it at an imaginary figure across the portico. The man's hand was steady

and the sun glinted on the steel barrel.

"And because you shot thus," said Abner, "you did not kill him. Listen, Mansfield: the pistol that killed the Abolitionist was held upside down and close. The brand on the dead man's face is under the bullet hole. If the pistol had been held as usual, the brand would have been above it. It is a law of pistol wounds: as you turn the weapon, so will the brand follow. Held upside down, the brand was below the wound."

A deepening wonder came into the old man's ironical face.

"How did the creature die, then, if I missed him?"

Abner took up the weapon on the arm of Randolph's chair.

"The dead man did not shoot in Mansfield's fantastic duel," he said. "Nevertheless this pistol has been fired. And observe there is a smeared bloodstain on the sharp edges of the barrel. I think I know what happened."

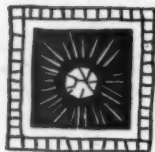
"The madman with his pistol, overwrought, struggled in the cabin yonder to make himself a 'sacrifice of blood' and so bring on this war. Some one resisted his mad act—some one who seized the barrel of the pistol and in the struggle turned it upside down and in the struggle also got a wounded hand. Who in that cabin had a wounded hand, Randolph?"

"By the living God!" cried the Justice of the Peace. "The woman who plaited thorns! It was a blind to cover her injured hand!"

Abner looked out across the great meadows at a tiny figure far off, fading into the twilight of the distant road that led toward the Ohio.

"To cover her injured hand," he echoed, "and also, perhaps, who knows, to symbolize the dead man's mission, as she knew he saw it. The heart of a woman is the deepest of all God's riddles!"

Mr. Post's stories are all based on actualities. For instance, the point in this story that the pistol was held upside down is discussed in *People vs McLaughlin*, Logan County, Colorado, 1890, and considered in *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* of August 14, 1890. "*The Mystery of Chance*," the next of the "Uncle Abner" stories, will be in an early issue of *The Red Book Magazine*.



The Togbury Jool

PHILO GUBB, graduate in twelve complete lessons of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting, encounters a new mystery.

By Ellis Parker Butler

America's Foremost Humorist

I L L U S T R A T E D B Y R E A I R V I N

ACCORDING to the table printed on the first page of the directory of the Riverbank Mutual Telephone Company, the letter *W* meant two long and three short rings, but three long and two short rings meant the letter *J*.

It was a proud day for Philo Gubb, the paper-hanger-detective, when he saw the neat oak box that meant instant communication with any of the Riverbank Mutual's subscribers fastened to his office wall. Nothing that had occurred since he had completed the course, in twelve lessons, of the Rising Sun Detective Bureau's Correspondence School of Detecting had given him such a sense of satisfaction. There was the telephone, screwed to the wall, with its call number neatly marked on it—37-*W*—and it meant that science had placed at the command of the sleuth another great invention. It meant that Justice was better able to combat crime. It seemed to mean that P. Gubb, detective, being able to telephone instead of trotting about, would have that much more time to concentrate his mind on any case that required his attention.

It seemed so, but it did not prove so.

Thirty-seven seemed to be a most popular party line. It ran from central exchange up the Avenue to Ninth Street, and it was the only wire running up the Avenue, and therefore anyone wishing to use the telephone system of the Riverbank Mutual and living on the Avenue was given a splice onto the wire and became 37-*A* or 37-*X* as a number. Each letter meant a certain jingling of the bell, from one short ring for *A* to two long, one short and two long for *Z*, and as "Party-line 37" tapped one-twentieth of the business and a fine part of the social center of Riverbank, the poor little twin bell on the telephone was almost whanged to a frazzle by continuous ringing.

For three days—six A.M. to twelve P.M., with only time out for meals—P. Gubb sat before the telephone with a rapt expression on his face and his ears inclined upward and forward, muttering, "Two long and one short. One short and three long. One long and one short and one long. Two short and one long," and so on as the telephone bell jangled out its request for attention. From time to time, confused by the many possible combinations, he refreshed his memory

of his own call by referring to the first page of the directory and repeated "Two long and three short—two long and three short" in a vain attempt to fix the number firmly in his mind.

At twelve o'clock midnight on the third day, while he was staring at the telephone and listening eagerly, his head drooped forward, his eyes closed and he slept. He was awakened by his subconscious mind, which seemed to insist that it had heard two long and three short rings. For a moment or two, P. Gubb blinked stupidly; then he arose and took down the telephone receiver for the first time since the instrument had been installed, and placed it to his eager ear.

"—and clean it out, understand?" said a voice that had evidently been speaking.

"I don't just get you," said another voice, "but—" and then the first voice:

"That's all right. I can't say everything over the telephone. You do that, Doc, and it will be all right."

Philo Gubb replaced the receiver carefully. He had not meant to be an interloper. He looked at his watch. It was one o'clock in the morning. He carefully removed his garments and crawled into his bed—which, when not a bed, was a book-case with permanently interned books, or mock-books. In five minutes he was snoring. In six minutes he jumped out of bed and leaped to the telephone. He had, this time, he was sure, heard two long and three short rings—or he had dreamed it.

As he clapped the receiver to his ear he heard a groan.

"Hello!" he said. "Who is it?"

"O—h! Thank God!" groaned the voice. "Is that Gubb?"

"This is Mister Philo Gubb," answered the detective. "To whom am I speaking?"

"Gubb! Gubb! Thank God I got you!" cried the man at the other end of the wire. "This is Waldeck—Jim Waldeck, Togbury's hired man. Come up here right away. I've been trying to get police headquarters for ten minutes. Come quick."

Philo Gubb's sleepiness instantly disappeared.

"Where are you at, and what seems to be the cause of calling me up at all hours

of the night?" asked the lanky detective.

"I'm murdered," groaned Jim Waldeck. "I'm dying here. The house has been robbed, and I'm locked in a closet and bleeding to death. Come quick. Get the police."

"Are you at the residence of Mister Togbury at the present moment of time?" asked Mr. Gubb calmly.

"Yes. Come, I tell you! Come quick."

"I will come immediately if not sooner," said Mr. Gubb. "Good-by!" And he hung up the receiver. He turned away and drew on his garments. From his desk he took his pocket microscope and a false mustache; from the table at his bedside he took one of the twelve small booklets containing the twelve lessons in detecting. The one he chose was Lesson VII—"Murders and Burglaries." He slipped it into his pocket,



As he clapped the receiver to his ear he heard a groan.

put on his hat and walked from the building.

It was a miserable night, with a cold November rain dribbling down, and the streets were deserted. Detective Gubb buttoned his overcoat collar close around his neck and started off with long strides. He turned the corner and hurried to the police station. A light burned within, and he opened the door and entered. Mike Doolan sat in a chair before the barrel stove, wrapped in deep slumber. Mr. Gubb shook him by the shoulder.

"Hey!" shouted the policeman. "What's the matter? Hey! Don't—"

He rubbed his eyes, then grinned sheepishly.

"I closed me eyes for a moment t' keep the flare of the fire out of thim," he explained. "Hello, 'tis Mister Gubb! What's wanted, Mister Gubb, sir?"

"A robbery and murder has been committed onto the premises of Mr. Togbury," said P. Gubb, "and James Waldeck, the hired man, has been murdered to death, and—"

Doolan was out of his chair and into his overcoat in one jump.

"An' me sleepin' like a porpoise!" he cried. "Hey! stop that buggy out there!"

The buggy was rattling over the brick-paved street outside, and Philo strode to the door and shouted. The vehicle, drawn by a well set-up horse, stopped, turned in the street and drew up at the curb.

"Well, what?" asked the voice of Dr. Fleming, the town's best physician, who had been out on a late night, or

early morning, interview with a stork.

"Man murdered," said Mike Doolan shortly. "Can the three of us crowd in? Henry Togbury's house on th' Avenue. Let her go, Doc."

It was a tight squeeze for the three men in the small buggy, but the horse was willing to exert itself in the cold air, and the buggy rounded the corner briskly. The rig clattered up the deserted Avenue and stopped before the home of Henry Togbury, one of the wealthiest citizens of Riverbank. The three men clambered

out, and Mr. Doolan and Mr. Gubb ran to the house while Dr. Fleming fastened the hitching weight to the horse's bridle. Then he too hurried toward the house. A minute later a second buggy clattered along the Avenue, but from the opposite direction, and stopped before the Togbury mansion. The occupant of the buggy also fastened his horse with a hitching weight, and he too hurried to the house. He was Dr. Sam Wick, an empirical physician, popular principally among those who could



It was a miserable night.

not pay the prices of the more regularly qualified physicians and who—to tell the truth—seldom paid Dr. Wick. He reached the door just as Dr. Fleming was entering.

Dr. Wick pushed in at the door.

"I was called on this case," he said rudely. "I was called by telephone. This is my case, Doctor."

"Just so," said Dr. Fleming quietly. "But now that I am here I will have a look at it myself, if you don't mind."

I'm the Coroner's physician, you will recall. I understand this is a murder."

"Murder nothing!" said Dr. Wick. "Unless the *déad* man called me."

By this time they were both in the hallway of the house, and Dr. Fleming threw off his great bearskin coat, drew off his soaking gloves and was rubbing his hands briskly. His emergency case he stood on a chair. Dr. Wick threw off his thin overcoat, and he too rubbed his hands to restore the circulation.

The Togbury mansion was the typical well-to-do Riverbank citizen's home. It was large and roomy. The hallway was of good size, and on either side was a spacious room—one the parlor and the other the dining-room. The furniture was of all sorts—gilded, mahogany, black walnut and rosewood, plentifully upholstered in varied colors and carved into many meaningless decorations. The portières were, of course, ropes of chenille and shells and beads and bamboo splints. The carpets were resplendent with large flowers. There was much bric-a-brac, and many gaudy sofa pillows littered the floors and couches. It was the home of proud and ungoverned Western wealth.

In the midst of this conglomeration, Mrs. Togbury, a woman of forty-five, now lay back in a great chair, her hands clasped over her heart, and Mr. Togbury—a short, stout man some seven years her senior—stood with his hand on her shoulder. From time to time she twitched hysterically, and then he would increase the pressure on her shoulder and she would become calmer again. In her lap lay a small velvet box, and in it was a brooch, and in the center of the brooch there were a dozen prongs that had once held protectingly the Togbury jewel. These prongs now held nothing but empty air; the jewel was gone. The most valuable diamond in Riverbank had been stolen out of the brooch.

When Philo Gubb, with Policeman Doolan, entered the Togbury mansion just ahead of Dr. Fleming, Mrs. Togbury was just recovering from a fainting spell and Mr. Togbury was still bending over her. The hallway, the parlor and the dining-room showed evidence of terrific struggle. Chairs and tables were

overturned; rugs were trampled askew, bric-a-brac was scattered about the floor; and blood stains were here and there. There had evidently been a tremendous fight in the rooms.

With the instinct of a true detective, these blood-stains immediately attracted Philo Gubb's attention. They led from the dining-room, across the hallway and ended at a door under the stairway at the rear of the hallway. In the moment or two, while Mr. Togbury was still working over his wife, Philo Gubb had called Mr. Doolan's attention to this fact, and now both the detective and the policeman were standing with their ears against the closet door. From the interior of the closet came deep, pain-wracked groans. Mr. Gubb put his hand on the knob of the closet door and tried to open it. The door was locked. Below the knob a key protruded from the keyhole, and Mr. Doolan put out his hand to turn the key.

"Stop!" said Philo Gubb instantly, and Mr. Doolan drew back.

"There's some wan in there that's hurt," said Mr. Doolan. "Ye can't get in without unlockin' the door, can ye?"

Philo Gubb turned to Mr. Togbury.

"Did you lock up into this closet the individual person that is into it at the present moment of time?" he asked sternly.

Mr. Togbury turned. His face showed the most evident surprise.

"That closet! Is there some one locked in that closet?" he exclaimed, and Mrs. Togbury threw up her arms and screamed. Dr. Wick pressed toward the door and bent down. The groans were increasing.

"Look here," said Dr. Wick, "this door is locked, and it is locked from the outside."

"Never you care to mind how that door is locked," said Mr. Gubb sternly. "I am asking Mr. Togbury."

"My heavens!" cried Mr. Togbury. "No, of course I did not lock that door. My wife and I came home from Derlingport, and we came in and saw everything upside down, and her brooch box here on the floor, and she just threw up her hands and fainted. That's all that has happened since we came in at the front

door. I've been working over her every minute since. I did not touch that door, or think of it. But—"

"Is your telephone into that closet?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Yes," said Mr. Togbury, "but this is no time to talk about that. I know who is in there—my man Jim is in there and—"

"I have known for some period of time," said Mr. Gubb calmly, "that he was into that closet, because he telephoned to me out of it. I just wanted to make certain sure nobody had tampered with that key."

"Why?" asked Mr. Togbury.

"Because," said Mr. Gubb, "in cases of murder and such, a clue is a clue, and unjust suspicion oftentimes gets stuck onto the innocent party. If that key was turned in the lock like it is now and so was when you entered into this house, one thing is plain—your man Jim didn't commit this crime."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Togbury. "And if he's locked in there, it is because he fought these burglars and tried to protect my property and they overcame him and threw him in that closet and locked the door on him. Now, stop this chatter and get the poor fellow out. He may die in—"

"Nobody that has got a groan onto him like that is going to die immediately soon," said Mr. Gubb, "and all I've got to ask next is: What was your man Jim doing in this room?"

"He was doing in this room what it was his duty to do," said Mr. Togbury promptly. "See the bed-clothes on that couch? He was sleeping there according to my orders, to protect my property while my wife and I were out of town."

"Exceedingly well and good!" said Mr. Gubb. "That is sufficiently plenty of information onto that subject. I will open the closet door."

He did. He turned the key carefully in the lock and withdrew it from the key-hole, slipping it into his pocket. Then he turned the door knob. Mr. Togbury, Dr. Wick, Mr. Doolan, Dr. Fleming and Mrs. Togbury saw him turn the key and open the door. When the door was opened the sight that met their eyes was one that Riverbank was to talk of for

many days. In a great pool of his own blood, Jim Waldeck lay on the floor of the closet, the telephone receiver dangling above his head. Beyond the telephone were several rows of hooks on which hung coats and hats. The floor, on which the pool of blood had accumulated, had no rug or carpet, and Jim Waldeck lay on it, supporting himself with one hand while the blood trickled down his arm. His face was white from loss of blood.

Dr. Fleming and Dr. Wick bent down and raised the wounded man. He groaned as they lifted him.

"Easy! easy!" said Dr. Fleming. "I think, Doctor, we had better take him to the kitchen. If we put him on the kitchen table we can do the work better. And," he whispered, "Mrs. Togbury is in no shape to see this."

"Probably right," said Dr. Wick, and they carried the suffering man to the kitchen.

"What d' ye think of it?" asked Officer Doolan.

"Up to the present moment of time," said Philo Gubb, "I have not accumulated up enough clues to make it worth profitable while to think at all. After a little later I will think considerable out of it, no doubt. What's that under the dining-room table?"

Doolan looked. He walked into the dining-room and picked up the object to which Mr. Gubb had referred. It was a keen-edged knife, one of the sort used by bookkeepers in scratching out errors; it was now a mass of blood from point to end of handle. Doolan took it to Philo Gubb, and the detective looked it over carefully.

"Now, what for kind of a knife might that be?" asked Doolan, puzzled.

"It was the sort of kind of knife the deed was done with to Jim Waldeck, anyway," said Mr. Gubb, "and as such it is the valuable clue up to the present date. Now—"

He was interrupted by Dr. Wick, who opened the door of the butler's pantry and put his head into the room.

"Gubb," he said, "and you—Doolan—come out here."

The two men went through the butler's pantry to the kitchen, following

Dr. Wick. Jim Waldeck lay extended on the table, the upper half of his body bare. A pan of water bubbled over a burner of the gas range. Dr. Fleming was dropping an antiseptic from a small bottle into a pan of lukewarm water. Waldeck, weak from loss of blood, moaned but was hardly able to raise his head, it seemed. Dr. Fleming looked up as the two men entered.

"When doctors disagree—" he said cheerfully. "Doctor Wick and I are having a little dispute over this case. Unfortunately, we both claim the case and

you to throw this Fleming fellow out of this kitchen. He has no right here. I was called on this case, by this man on the table here and—"

"Well, now, I dunno, I dunno!" said Officer Doolan. "The vagaries of the law are many an' strange, Docther Wick, but I niver yet heard of the law that give a polisman the right t' throw one docther out of a man's house because another docther said the say so. 'Tis Misther Togbury's house, I'm thinkin'."

"I don't care whose house it is," cried Wick. "This is my patient. I was called



From time to time she twitched hysterically.

professional courtesy is going to the dogs between us. So—"

Dr. Wick's face turned fiery red. He was exceedingly angry.

"I was called on this case," he declared. "I was called by this man Waldeck himself." His voice rose angrily. "This is no case for a coroner's physician. This is a mere stab wound that I can handle alone, and this man Fleming butts in to rob me of my fee—"

"Oh, you can have the fee," said Fleming carelessly.

"I don't want the fee!" shouted Wick. "I want this patient. Doolan, I order

to care for this patient, and Mr. Togbury did not refuse to let me into the house, and I have a right to take care of my patient under the circumstances, and this man Fleming has no right here. I know all about him. I know that he tried to get the County Medical Association to declare me a quack. I know he has some animus. I tell you he has no right here."

"Doolan—listen!" said Dr. Fleming. "I have every right here. You brought me here as an emergency physician. And, more than that, since Doctor Wick insists—I have a contract with Mr. Togbury

to give medical and surgical care to his employees, not only in his factory but in his house here. I don't deny that this patient had a right to call in any doctor he chose as long as he was in charge of Mr. Togbury's house, but Mr. Togbury is now in charge of his own house. If he wants a half-baked empiric like this man Wick to handle a delicate case like this—all right! Mr. Togbury can say so. If he says so, I'll go."

"Can't the both of yez dope the poor felly what he needs to be doped?" asked Doolan.

"No!" exclaimed Dr. Fleming. "We can't do any partnership business on this case at all. We disagree utterly. This man Wick would insist that the wound be left open to drain; I would insist that it needs two stitches taken at once to close it, and, by the lord Harry, I'm going to take two stitches in this wound if I have to throw this man Wick out of the window."

"Now, Doc," said Doolan, turning to the angry Wick, "be a good felly an' let Fleming have his way. As I see it, ye have no standin' in this coort at all. He's got the contract, an' 'tis not Jim Waldeck's house, an' everyone knows that Doc Fleming is far an' away the finest docther of the two of yez. If Doc Fleming says 'Sew up' an' I let ye insist there sh'u'd be no sewin' up, an' this felly Waldeck sh'u'd die, I'm thinkin' I might be put in jail mesilf for permittin' crim'nal malpractice or some sich thing."

"Quite right," said Dr. Fleming with a grin. He bathed his hands in the antiseptic water, washed the wound carefully, and prepared to take the two stitches. "Just hold the patient steady for a moment, Gubb and Doolan, will you?" he asked, and while the two men held Waldeck, and Dr. Fleming proceeded, Dr. Wick bolted from the kitchen angrily. They might have heard the front door slam and the wheels of his buggy grate against the curb had their attention not been concentrated on the work in hand.

The deft hands of Dr. Fleming made short work of the two stitches, and in a few minutes Jim Waldeck's wound was sewed up and his shoulder bandaged.

"Now," said Dr. Fleming, "if Doolan will telephone the hospital for an ambulance, we will soon have our patient snug in a comfortable hospital bed. In a few days this wound will be healed."

Waldeck groaned.

"The wound," said Dr. Fleming, "must have been made with a stiletto or some other very sharp, narrow knife. It is a deep wound, but a clean one, and the flow of blood cleansed it well, and it will heal rapidly. If I had been choosing a spot in which to make a similar deep incision I could not have chosen more fortunately than the chance stroke of the stiletto happened to choose. Not an artery of any importance severed—only veins cut—no organ is anywhere near the spot in the shoulder where the wound was made. Waldeck is a lucky man."

Waldeck did not think so, for he groaned.

"I've got the knife into my pocket that made the hole into him," said Philo Gubb. He drew forth the knife. Dr. Fleming took it.

"Just so," said Fleming, and he plunged the knife into the pan of warm water. When he drew it out again the knife was free from blood. He looked at it carefully. "I suppose you consider this a clue, Gubb?" he asked.

"I so do, most certainly sure," said the paper-hanger-detective.

"And quite right," said Dr. Fleming. "Don't lose it, and don't let anyone handle it. Let me call your attention to something. This is the sort of scratching eraser bookkeepers use, isn't it? Look at the two edges—they have been whetted to extra keenness. But the knife is brand new. You can see the cost mark on the steel shank—*xba* over '\$1.00'—still. The ivory handle is still virgin white. I know something about edged tools. I know that some manicure scissors will not cut until they have been sharpened. I know that some pocket-knives will not cut until they have been whetted. But I know that these bookkeepers' knives are always keen edged when they are on sale. They are ready to use. Whoever bought this brand-new knife meant to use it for some other purpose than scratching out ledger mistakes. I'm no detective, but I

advise you to discover who bought this knife of the store that has a cost mark in which *xba* means some sum less than a dollar."

Doolan had returned from telephoning to the hospital.

"Mister Togbury would like t' talk a bit with the suf'rer," he said, "if Doc has no objections."

"Not a bit!" said Dr. Fleming promptly. "Tell Togbury to come out."

"I thought," said Mr. Togbury, "I might be able to find out something about the affair from Jim, if Jim is able to talk."

"He lost some blood, but he may be able to talk," said the physician. "You know Gubb, the detective?"

"Heard of him," said Mr. Togbury. "How do, Mr. Gubb. Now, Mr. Gubb, I don't think we will need your services at all. I don't know why you are here, but I consider this a case for the police entirely. I pay my taxes, and I help support this town's police force, and it is the duty of the force to protect me. I shall look to this town's police force to capture the thief or thieves. And, if you will pardon me for saying so, I don't believe in your ability to any great extent. No, sir, not to any great extent."

"Every person is entitled to the right to his own idea of his opinions," said Philo Gubb, but his face reddened with resentment. "I don't never aim to force myself in where I aint wanted."

"Quite right," said Mr. Togbury.

"But howsoever," said Mr. Gubb, "having gotten out of bed by the call of my telephone ringing two long and three short, and coming in the rain, and fetching the police force, which was asleep at the said moment of time, I would like to remain, free of cost or expense, to hear what Mr. Waldeck has to say about what happened."

"You can stay, but I'm not paying you," said Mr. Togbury, and he turned to Jim Waldeck. "Now, Jim, what about it?" he asked.

The injured man's voice was weak, but he told a straight forward story.

He had been asleep on the couch and must have been sleeping soundly, he said, when he heard a noise. He jumped off the couch, being entirely dressed because

he expected Mr. and Mrs. Togbury before morning, and at the same moment a man grasped him by the throat. The next instant a second man came running down the stairs and threw himself on him from the back. They were not masked, and Jim was sure he could identify them.

Jim had struggled as best he could. They did not strike him much—they tried to strangle him. The fight tumbled them from one room to another, and he gave as much as he got, for he was bigger than either, and the little fellow did not seem very strong. The little fellow coughed all the time, and Jim had an idea he might have beat them both had the little fellow not stabbed him. He did not see the little fellow draw the knife; he felt a prick-like in his shoulder and then a sharp pain, and the next thing he knew he felt faint and they just picked him up and carried him to the closet and threw him in. He did not know anything then, for a while. When he came to himself he telephoned for the police, and when he could not get them he remembered that Philo Gubb was a detective and telephoned to him. He had no memory of the jewel box that had held the brooch. He had only thought of trying to throw the burglars out.

"What I call the noble act of a brave man," said Dr. Fleming.

"What I expect of a man left in charge of my house," said Mr. Togbury. "I don't blame you for the loss of the jewel, Jim. You did what you could." He turned to Dr. Fleming. "This all comes in your contract with me. No extra charge, understand?"

"Certainly," said Dr. Fleming with just a trace of sarcasm. "I'm well enough paid to have driven that quack Wick out of your house."

"How did he get here, anyway?" asked Mr. Togbury.

"I telephoned for him," said Jim Waldeck weakly. "I didn't know who else to telephone for. His name was the first name I came to in the book."

"Gubb!" said Dr. Fleming after the ambulance had taken Waldeck away. "What do you think of Jim Waldeck?"

"I think he is a hero," said Philo Gubb frankly.

"So do I, of a certain sort," said Dr. Fleming, "but come inside the hall a moment."

They stepped inside.

"I want to telephone my house," said Dr. Fleming to Mr. Togbury, and he opened the door of the closet under the stairs. "Gubb," he said, "just get down on your knees and pick up these burned matches, will you?"

Philo Gubb stooped down. There were no burned matches on the floor of the closet. Dr. Fleming rang up his home while Philo Gubb searched. Mr. Gubb was not an utter fool. He glanced up and saw that there was no electric light, no gas jet, no lamp and no candle in the closet. He arose and stepped out of the closet. Dr. Fleming finished his telephoning and said good-morning to Mr. Togbury, Mrs. Togbury having retired.

"Come, Gubb!" he said, and then he paused. "Oh, by the way, Togbury," he said, "if you do decide to hire a detective, let me recommend Gubb. Born with a caul, hey? He may not be the greatest sleuth in the world, but he has the greatest halo of luck of any man I ever knew. Hey, Gubb?"

"Luck has little or less to do with the detective business than you presume to imagine," said Mr. Gubb stiffly, and he turned his back and walked out of the room and out of the house.

Dr. Fleming hailed him before he had gone far. He insisted that Philo Gubb get into the buggy.

"Gubb," he said, "there are several sorts of clues a detective may have. You have that knife—that's a tangible clue. You didn't find matches on the floor of the telephone closet—these matches you didn't find are intangible clues. But there is a better clue than either. When a tight-wad like Togbury rubs it in that I'm to treat a nearly murdered man at a cheap contract price that contemplated no such sort of case, and I get my dander up, I'm the finest little clue in the world. And when that same old tight-wad takes occasion to tell a detective he's no good, almost in the same breath that he tries to save a few pennies from me, I'm the clue that detective wants to follow, and now is the time to follow me."

"To where at?" asked Mr. Gubb.

"To the telephone central office," said Dr. Fleming.

As they clattered down the street, Philo Gubb recapitulated in his mind the case as it stood. The Togbury jewel had been stolen; Jim Waldeck had struggled with the burglars; Jim Waldeck had been locked in a telephone closet and the key had been turned on the outside of the door; Jim Waldeck could not have locked himself into the closet. The problem was: Who stole the jewel and where was the jewel at that moment? Dr. Fleming, as the horse stopped before the telephone central office, interrupted Philo Gubb's thoughts.

"By the way," he said, "don't waste time looking for the jewel. I know where it is."

"Did you see the jool?" asked Philo Gubb, vastly surprised.

"Felt it," said Dr. Fleming shortly. "It's safe. Come on up."

Of the sleepy girl at the switch-board, Dr. Fleming asked just three questions: "Did Togbury's residence call the police by name or by number? Did Togbury's residence call Dr. Wick by name or by number? Did Togbury's residence call Philo Gubb by name or number?" The answer to all three was "By number."

"Thought so," said Dr. Fleming, and he led Philo Gubb to the street. "That means," said he, "that Jimmy Waldeck hid the jewel himself."

"Hid it where?" asked Philo Gubb in amazement. "You mean to indicate the information that he stole it and hid it?"

Dr. Fleming laughed.

"Something like that," he said. "Gubb, for Heaven's sake don't be any more stupid than necessary. I've told you the whole thing already."

"Have you?" asked Philo Gubb dumbly.

"No matches on the floor of the closet," said Dr. Fleming. "How could Waldeck read the numbers in the telephone directory without striking matches when it was as dark as pitch in there with the door closed? Central says he called by number. He must have memorized the numbers to do that. He might possibly, have memorized the numbers of the police station and Dr. Wick casually, but how about your number—a new one?"

He must have learned that particularly to call you so that you would find him locked in the closet—locked in from the outside."

"My number is the same as the Togbury number, but with a *W*," said Philo Gubb. "Anybody could remember that."

"Doubtless," said Dr. Fleming. "He might prove that. But how about these?"

Philo Gubb took the pair of pincers that the Doctor held toward him. They were peculiarly constructed. The twin noses of them were long and thin but strong. The ends of the noses had sharp teeth.

"A man could go into a closet, close the door on himself and then turn the key with these, even if the key was on the outside," said the Doctor.

Philo Gubb took the key from his pocket. On the end of the key—the end inserted into the keyhole—were the marks of sharp teeth such as the pincers had.

"Now," said the Doctor, "there's proof, as I look at it. Waldeck wanted to steal the Togbury jewel. He waited until the family was away and he, as usual, was told to sleep on the couch. He rough-housed the three rooms, making them look as if a struggle had taken place. He took the jewel from the brooch and hid it. He locked himself into the closet. He telephoned to you and the police in order that you might be able to prove that he was locked in. And then—he telephoned to this quack—this faker—this doctor, Wick. Now!"

"A man don't stab himself," said Gubb.

"Not unless he thinks it is going to be worth while," said Dr. Fleming. "But suppose a certain quack doctor was in league with a thief. Suppose he bought a particularly sharp and thin style of knife and gave it a surgical instrument edge and dipped it in cocaine to deaden the pain. Suppose he showed the thief the exact spot where the knife would be pushed in, where it would do the least possible harm and draw a good lot of blood. Perfectly safe! Before much blood is shed the quack would be on the

spot to staunch the wound and take the long thin pincers from the thief's pocket. And suppose you and the police and Mr. and Mrs. Togbury all arrived at the same time. Who safer to receive the stolen jewel than the doctor that has come to assist the sufferer? Only—"

"Only what?" asked Philo Gubb.

"Only I happened to get there at the same time," said Dr. Fleming gleefully. "Only I would not have the quack fool with an employee of one of my patrons. So *I* was on the spot, and *I* took charge, and *I*—"

He was standing with his foot on the hub of the buggy. He chuckled and put his hand in his pocket. When he drew forth his hand he opened it and disclosed to Philo Gubb's staring eyes the Togbury jewel!

"*I*," continued the Doctor, "probed the wound. *I*, and not that quack, took the diamond from the wound, into which Jim Waldeck had rammed it like a bullet, in order that Quack Wick might take it out and make away with it while Jim Waldeck posed as an heroic preserver of his master's property."

Philo Gubb's eyes bulged. Dr. Fleming put his hand on Gubb's arm.

"Now, don't mistake me, Gubb," he said, with a twinkle in his eyes. "You would probably have discovered all this sooner or later by following one clue and another, but the greatest thing in detecting is to get results, and I have given you a short cut. That's all. You're the detective, and I'm your best clue. Presently old Togbury will get tired of waiting for the Togbury jewel to come home, and he will offer a reward for its return. Then you will produce it and get the reward and glory. I'm your clue. You follow me."

"Where at shall I follow you to?" asked Philo Gubb with a pleased grin.

"Well, if you follow me now," said Dr. Fleming, as he slipped the Togbury jewel back into his pocket, "you'll follow me right across the street to Hank's Restaurant and help your best clue devour six wheat cakes, two soft-boiled eggs, a slice of broiled ham and a cup of coffee."

With a clue like that, Philo Gubb has a great advantage. Read how he uses it in "One Hundred Dollars Reward," in the June issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands May 22nd.

The Previous Chapters of "EMPTY POCKETS"

PERRY MERITHEW, a profligate millionaire of New York, was found dead on the roof of an East Side tenement, grasping in his stained hands eight strands of copper-colored hair. The only other clue was a hatpin of peculiar design lying near by. Immediately, search was started for the woman whose hair would match those incriminating strands. Hallard, a reporter who knew "Merry Perry's" record, made straight for Aphra Shaler, a recipient of Perry's princely support. He found her fleeing, her copper hair bleached to ash. She flung behind her the retort, "Look up Muriel Schuyler. He liked her, and she has copper-colored wool."

And with that began the story of the effect of the dead rone's life on the foul and the fair, the rich and the poor, during the year before its tragic end, and the narration of the events that led to that end.

MURIEL SCHUYLER, a beautiful, unspoiled young aristocrat, met Merry Perry in her father's office, where she went to ask for five thousand dollars with which to ransom a kidnaped Italian child. Merry Perry was there to borrow to pay a blackmailer. Mr. Schuyler refused both. Muriel was heartbroken, and when Merry Perry called her up later and told her he would give her that five thousand, if she would meet him at the yacht club and give him one dance, Muriel accepted. She was seen receiving the money by "Pet" Bettany, a gossip-loving dangler on the edge of society. Unconscious of danger, Muriel proceeded toward ransoming the child, with the help of a poor young physician, Dr. Clinton Worthing.

Dr. Worthing had made a real impression on Muriel by coming into her life when her automobile hit a crippled newsboy, Happy Hanigan. A mob had attacked Muriel, and her head had been gashed. Dr. Worthing had dressed Muriel's wound and prepared his heart to fulfill her commands. Her first had been to get the best surgeon to straighten poor Happy's twisted body; her second, to aid her in keeping a poor Jewish girl from being deported to Russia; the third, to help get back to his mother the kidnaped boy.

Muriel had also helped Maryla Sokalska, a beautiful—and copper-haired—Polish girl, by obtaining for her a position as model at a fashionable dressmaker's. There Merry Perry saw Maryla—and Muriel's well-meant charity ended in Merry Perry's placing the ignorant Maryla on his bounty roll.

Muriel went with the ransom money to the tenement home of the boy's parents, Red Ida, a pickpocket and singer, and her husband "Shang" Ganley, a gunman, recognized Muriel from newspaper pictures, and lured her to a deserted building where she was held prisoner by Ganley and his pals.

Meantime, Red Ida went up town to sing at a restaurant, and Dr. Worthing hunted for Muriel. Red Ida, afraid of consequences, got a chance to dance with Perry Merithew, when she saw him in the restaurant, and told him of Muriel's abduction and where in the suburbs she was to be taken that night. Merithew immediately picked up a detective and motored thither.

At midnight Dr. Worthing recognized Muriel being thrust into a taxi. He followed in another. In a wild race across the city, the fleeing taxi eluded police and all, gained its lonely suburban destination—and ran squarely into Merithew and his detective. Muriel was taken from the gunmen though they escaped.

DISGUSTED to find that Merithew instead of Dr. Worthing had rescued her, Muriel's gratitude was curt, but her aloofness only made her all the more desirable in the profligate's eyes. He determined to divorce his wife and marry Muriel. He gave "Red Ida" hush money, turned poor, helpless Maryla adrift and followed Muriel and her parents to Europe, where they went to escape the notoriety of Muriel's kidnaping.

Several months later, when they all had returned to New York, Muriel was still unconscious of Merithew's passion for her. But Pet Bettany knew. Her eyes had again been busy. She had seen Merithew's admiration for Muriel's copper-colored locks and had had her dark hair changed to auburn in an attempt to divert those admiring glances to herself. Aphra Shaler knew too and was filled with a wild jealousy. And poor Maryla knew also that some one else now filled Merithew's inconstant life, and her whole strength had become one fierce hatred for him. She had given birth to a child—and longed to pierce the heart of its father with the one thing she had left that he had given her, a hatpin of peculiar design.

All these heart-burnings centered about Muriel, who had never as yet learned hatred for anyone. Oblivious and happy, she sent for Dr. Worthing as soon as she had entered her Fifth Avenue home, and she raised that young man to the seventh heaven of joy by planning to take up their care of their New York poor just where they left off.



Empty Pockets

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "What Will People Say?" etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

CHAPTER XXXV

WHEN a bad man like Perry Merithew makes up his soul to become a good man, he is apt to find that he must first do a number of deeds that he would have thought far beneath him before. For there are many things that wicked people hold very dear but good people must cast aside. To those who hate to be impolite or inconsiderate to anybody, this makes conversion difficult and back-sliding pleasant.

So at least it was with Perry Merithew. He had come to know Muriel Schuyler and to be fascinated by her. Perry felt no desire to flirt with Muriel. So far as he could tell, she had never tried to flirt with him. He regarded her

as sacredly as he could regard anything or anybody, and the love of her made him solemn. He yearned to win her, not by dragging her down to his level but by dragging himself up to hers. If the scramble aloft involved kicking several old friends in the face, the best he could do for them was to call out "Look sharp below there!" and "So sorry!"

The first victim of his upward effort had been Maryla Sokalska, who had been the last victim of his old psychology. He was not proud of his treatment of Maryla, but he was glad to be free of her.

Next there was his once beloved and all too faithful wife. She had long ago given up storming at Perry. She had almost recovered from caring, though the dreary ache of her pride awoke in

the depths when she heard of some latest escapade of his; when she realized that everybody realized how she was ill-treated. That is the ugliest, meanest part of the business of infidelity, the loneliness and the contempt or pity it bestows on the neglected partner.

Mrs. Merithew could not bring herself to the consolation of playing the same game and matching intrigue with intrigue. She had a son growing up, and he was growing away from the home too. He had reached the age when he would fall heir to the same temptations that had governed his father's life. She saw in the young man the graces that had made Perry so fascinating, made his delicate brutalities forgivable. She was afraid for the boy, and she could not find a way to protect him from life.

An early marriage for love would not guarantee him, for Perry had married her for love, and it was not long before he had found "Home, Sweet Home" the tritest and stupidest of tunes.

Mrs. Merithew felt aged and terrified and no less forlorn because the desert reef where she was marooned was one of the most comfortable summer homes on Long Island. She could not keep Perry Second even there; he preferred New York in spite of its heat, and she feared that he was pursuing some of the pretty tradespeople who use musical comedy as a place of advertisement. So Mrs. Merithew made an excuse to stay in town except over the week-ends.

She was in a panic concerning her son and longing for help, when her butler rejoiced her heart by saying that her husband had telephoned that he would be dining at home. She decided that heaven had answered her prayers and sent her prodigal back to her aid. She hurried off to a coiffeur and had her hair remodeled in the latest school of architecture. She ordered everything that Perry best liked to eat and drink, and she took from the lavender of memory the little smiles and expressions that had once delighted him.

PERRY was very gracious at the table, and she thought that the three of them made rather a fine family group. But the young man treated his father

with a comradeship in cynicism that made her blood run cold. Her one consolation was that Perry rebuked him, and read him a moral lecture of a sobriety that astounded Mrs. Perry. But it left the Junior Perry smiling broadlier than ever, and when Perry finished his Polonian sermon, the young Laertes winked at him and said:

"That's good stuff, Pop; and you read it better than you possibly could if you really meant it." He rose and went to his mother's chair. "Good night, little girl; I must leave you, but beware of this interesting stranger."

He kissed his mother, winked again at his father and escaped to some mysterious engagement.

Perry and Mrs. Perry looked at each other in despair. Perry was the more shocked of the two. They adjourned to the drawing-room, where they sat at the open window in the dark, listening to the infrequent *clop-clop* of a hansom horse or the occasional groan of a motor-horn on the sparsely frequented Avenue.

Perry sent many yards of pale blue ribbon from his cigar out on the warm air before he found courage to say:

"I want to have a little serious talk with you, my dear."

"I'm listening."

"I've been a rotter to you, and I'm well aware of it. I'm going to turn over a new leaf and settle down."

The candle that he lighted in her heart he snuffed out at once:

"You've been a brick. You've stood more than you have any reason to stand, and you've taken punishment like a soldier. I'm not going to punish you any longer. You're too sick of the sight of me to want me round the place again. I've piled up more grudges than you could ever forget. So I'm going to give you the one gift I can—your freedom."

He thought he heard a little gasp of protest, and he hurried on:

"You're young and beautiful, and you've a right to your place in the sun. You take a divorce and go your way, and I'll go mine. You're richer than I am, but I'll make a settlement on you that will put you up among the pictures. And I'll set aside a fund for the boy. What do you say?"

She said nothing at all, but he heard her crying softly in the dark. He was touched, and he reached out to seize her hand. If only that touch could have thrilled him as once it had! He drew his chair close to her, and she wept on his shoulder, sobbing:

"I don't want a divorce. I want you. I want my home."

He patted her farther shoulder as one would pat a faithful old sick hound, and he said:

"But I can't give you myself, my dear. A man can't do what he ought to do. At least I can't. When I find out that there's something I ought to do, it becomes impossible. I'm sorry. I'm ashamed. But what can I do? Life's a nuisance, and I wish I were dead."

"Don't say that!" she pleaded with superstitious panic. "You mustn't say that. Something might happen."

She clung to him and kept his arm about her, but he sat glowering. He felt angry at himself, yet angrier at her, and angriest at life. A passer-by seeing their blended shadows would have thought them lovers.

It would have simplified everything divinely if they could have returned to that blest estate, but their embrace was a burlesque, for their souls could not reach each other. He was a man that lived and loved on thrills, and she could not thrill him. Almost any other woman in his arms would have stirred some warmth in his heart, even an ugly one; for if all cats are gray in the dark, all women were pink to Perry Merithew. Even his wife would have been if he had not known her name. But because she had a right to his fire and the only right, she was the only one who froze his soul.

He hated himself for this more than she did, but even his wrath did not kindle him. It made him sick.

It was Perry's nature to grow frantic with restlessness when he was not happy. He endured his wife's devotion for a few minutes; then he felt a womanish desire to tear his hair, a mannish desire to run away from gloom.

He broke his wife's clasp and paced the floor, saying:

"It's no use. Blame me all you will,

but I can't be happy here and I can't make you happy. There's a chance for us both if you'll let me go. I want to do the right thing by you; but if we stay married, I'll go on as I have, only worse. If you let me go, I'll be as sober as a judge."

Her answer was a dismal little chuckle: "No, Perry, no! I know you better than you know yourself—better than that other woman does, too. If she's your kind, you'll tire of her quicker than you tired of me. If she's honest—and I don't see how she can be and accept your attentions—you'd break her heart as you did mine. I ought to let you marry her just out of revenge, I suppose, and I might if it weren't for the boy. But he's going to have a home and at least a nominal father as long as you live. So if you're going to settle down, settle down to that. Now go tell her so. Good night!"

II

PERRY went glumly from the house, cursing as bad people do the inconceivable wickedness of the good. He walked rapidly down the Avenue, swinging his light stick with fury. The Avenue was lonely and dark as a small town street. He felt the need of lights and life. He remembered that he had promised "Red Ida" Ganley that he would meet her at Madison Square Garden.

She had captured him by telephone that day, and he had consented to see her because it was easier to make and break a promise than to refuse her insistence. He had not the faintest intention of keeping the engagement, or of ever seeing her or her sort again.

But he was in a fume of discontent. He was sick of good women already. They had no sense. They did not understand the world. He would have nothing more to do with them. He whistled to a taxicab and stepped in, telling the driver to take him to Madison Square Garden. At that time the huge arena was given over to dancing under the auspices of the amazing Castles, whose Castle House had not sufficed to provide space for the maxixe-mania.

He found Ida waiting. He did not



Perry was disgusted at being caught out with Pet on one of her bad days, but he decided to put on a bold front. He about to topple. A sudden vicious inspira-



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

started to rise and go to Muriel. But Pet had passed the danger point. Her cigarette caught her notice: the ashes were
tion led her to flick them in Perry's eye.

notice that she left the side of a young thug to run to him. He checked his hat and stick and took her into his arms for the dance that was pouring from the band.

Ida was dressed in a quaint burlesque of the latest fashion, and her hair was piled up on her head like a battered copper kettle turned upside down. She was so small that Perry saw mostly her hair. He decided that it had been born plain red but had been tampered with. She danced well in a common cabaretish way, and her vulgarities of speech amused him more than better diction could have done at the time; for he was in a rebel mood.

He laughed at Ida for a while and recognized with smiling contempt that she was trying to coquet with him. He said:

"What would that ferocious husband of yours think of your flirting with me?"

"Me floit?" said Ida. "It'd soive him right if I was to take up with you poimenant."

Perry winced at the thought, but he answered with the grace of the complete courtier: "That would be too much to hope."

"Say, are you stringin' me?" said Ida. "I aint quite got your number yet."

"I doubt if I have one," said Perry.

"Everybody's got a number and a goat," said Ida, to whom yesterday's slang was to-day's classic. "And your number's thoitteen if I don't wise you up."

"Then for heaven's sake wise me quick," said Perry, who was tiring of her paucity of charm. "You said something about an important secret or something. I don't want to hurry you—but I have another engagement."

"You got a date to take a ride in a hoisse if you don't listen tuh me," said Ida.

"A hearse? Ugh!" Perry mocked. "Save me! Save me!"

But Ida, with a sudden shudder that startled him, muttered: "Keep on dancin', but woik your way round to the door. We gotta beat it. He's here lookin' for me. I don't think he's sor me yet, but he's lookin' the bunch over."

"And who is he?" said Perry.

"Where can we go where we can have a talk with nobody distoibin' us?" said Ida.

"That is a problem," said Perry warily. "I could hardly take you to my club."

"You couldn't come to my flat, could you? Or could you?"

"I'm afraid not," said Perry with great positiveness. Then he remembered that a taxicab was a convenient place for uninterrupted conferences. He suggested this, and Ida agreed heartily. He collected his hat and stick and they entered a taxicab. He told the chauffeur, "Just drive around," trusting him to know where that was.

A policeman in plain clothes, recognizing them both, took a step in their direction, but decided not to interfere. He made a mental note that if Perry Merithew sent in an alarm that he had been robbed, he would hunt at once for Red Ida, the well known "dip." And he set the gossip going in select police circles that Perry Merithew must have lost his mind, or worse yet his money, to be taking up with a cheap crook like Ida Ganley.

IT was not Ida's plan to put Perry Merithew into the hearse she spoke of: that would end his value. It was not her plan to alarm him so that he would call in the police. Black Hand blackmail was risky, and it rarely worked even once. It was her scheme to use the obsolete but never quite forgotten "badger game."

She would entice Perry to some trusting place, and there Shang Ganley would surprise them, play the injured husband, produce at least two revolvers, and threaten to avenge his ruined home with a murder or two. Ida would plead dramatically for her paramour, and Shang would slowly relent on condition that Perry paid dearly for the husband's broken heart.

The beauty of this venerable device is that the victim is the last one on earth to desire police participation. And once caught, he can be levied on again and again. He is as good as a bond, with coupons to cut off at least twice a year.

Ida was in love with the plan. The

only difficulty had been to lure her prey to her lair.

"That's some job, believe me!" she had told Shang. "That'll take a bit of loorin'. A swell bear-cat like him aint goin' to fall for no cheap bunk."

Eventually she was inspired to win Perry to her arms by "throwing a scare" into him. She would warn him against an imaginary conspiracy.

"He'll be turrible grateful, for he's —oh, he's a poifect gent'man. Maybe he'll offer me money," she had said to Shang, "and if he does, I'll spoin it."

"Oh Gawd!"

"I know how it hoits, but in the foist place it would simpully roon everything if he suspicioned that my motuffs was moissinarius. In the second place, are we playin' for big stakes or are we pikin'?"

"They can't come too big for me," Shang murmured with glittering eyes.

IDA had telephoned and made the engagement with Perry, and now, thanks to the patience of Perry's wife, he was here. The first step in her campaign was achieved. Ida had lassoed her prey and was ready to throw the scare into him.

Perry did not take advantage of the opportunity to make love to Ida. His first remark was:

"And now the secret, please."

"Well, listen," Ida began with a sigh. "You know I put you hep to the kidnapin' of Miss Schuyler." He nodded. "Well, some o' them gun-men must 'a' reco'nized you when you held 'em up and took Muriel away from 'em. They're on to you and they're after you."

This was not pleasant. Perry ceased to patronize. New York has its vendetta cult as well as Sicily, and people are found dead about town with disconcerting frequency.

Perry was no coward, but the situation was uncomfortable. He could never know where he was to be struck, by whom or when. He said as jauntily as he could:

"And what do these gentlemen intend to do to me—kill me?"

"Oh, I don't think they'd go quite as far as that," said Ida.

"Then I needn't worry," said Perry, "so long as they don't kill me entirely."

"O' course," Ida drawled, "when a man is beat up too rough, the results is sometimes fatalous."

"I see," said Perry. "Well, just tell the gentlemen that I carry a revolver and I shoot quick and straight."

"Then they'd get you arrested under the Sullivan law."

"Then tell me their names and I'll have the police gather them in in advance."

"Police nothin'. There's too many in them gangs. The cops can't get 'em all. Besides, what evidunce you got outside o' my woid? And I wouldn't dast go to the court. They'd get me sure; and you, too."

"Then what do you advise?" said Perry.

"You leave it to Mamma. The plot aint quite settled yet. One of their best men aint out o' jail till a day or two. As soon as they decide, I'll know and I'll telephone you, and you meet me and I'll tell you how you can toin the whole bunch over to the cops, without your name appearin'. Do you get me?"

"I'm not sure," said Perry, "but I'm sure I'm ever so much obliged to you, and if a little money would be of any use to you, here it is."

Money is one of the hardest things on earth to say no to. But Ida was resolute. Perry urged her, but she said:

"Don't oige me. I don't consider it the act of no lady to take a tip like a waiter."

"But why do you do me this noble favor gratis?" said Perry.

"Because — because —" Ida took refuge in popular song, "Because I got a feelin' in my heart for you."

She leaned against him and lifted her face so that if he should be inclined to kiss her he would be caused the minimum of toil. Perry's generous heart could hardly ever resist such an appeal for alms. He knew that Ida was languishing for a caress, but he felt stingy. Still, he could hardly deny her some token of gratitude. He bent and printed a light, glancing blow on her nearer cheek-bone, and said with forced gratitude:



Muriel put up her hands to throw off her cloak, when Perry Merithew, dancing with Aphra, whirled her way. Perry



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

recognized Muriel before she did him. As soon as he saw her, he flung Aphra off with the curtest of "Pardons."

"How can I ever repay you?"

Ida sighed with deep disillusionment. "And he's the man that made love-makin' famous!"

When Perry had rid himself of Ida, he decided to go out of town and stay out till the gangsters forgot him. Nearly everybody was out of town anyway.

But he had promised to take Pet Bettany to luncheon, and she had threatened to be very dangerous if he disobeyed her invitation. For the first time in his life, he felt like entering a monastery.

CHAPTER XXXVI

MURIEL was spending an unusual amount of her time in town this summer. She had been abroad so long that New York attracted her as a sort of foreign city. She was spending a good deal of time also with Doctor Clinton Worthing. He had only one fault to find with Muriel, and that was her father's wealth.

While the cruelly prolonged hard times were shattering other fortunes, they seemed not even to shake down a capstone from the high castle of Jacob Schuyler. They managed, however, to injure Worthing's practice and to make it hard to collect what little he could earn. People could not even afford to be ill except on credit. So Worthing had leisure enough to cultivate Muriel.

One day he and she were coming away together from the hospital, where Happy Hanigan was swearing at his apparatus, and refusing to believe their latest promises that he should soon be unfettered. Hot as the day was, Muriel and Worthing walked—it absorbed so much more time. Their errancy led them into Fifth Avenue.

As Pet Bettany had told Perry, a woman can never have clothes enough, and though Muriel's wardrobes bulged with unworn frocks, she could not keep from pausing at nearly every window to cry out in longing for some hat or gown dangled there as bait. The weather was broiling, but the things displayed were all autumnal.

Poor Worthing felt his poverty. He

could not buy her things like these, and her appetite was evidently insatiable.

Eventually in their dawdling progress they reached a window which she could not pass. It cast a net out on the sidewalk and entangled her feet.

A gown hung there on a headless, armless, footless dummy. To Worthing it was simply that and nothing more. Muriel could see herself in it, alive and striding or gliding among its caressing folds.

"I'd sell my soul for that," she said. "I just must have that. It's Dutilh's shop. I have an account here, so it won't cost me anything. Come in and let's look at it."

But this was more than Worthing could undergo. He looked at his watch and pretended a patient waiting for him.

Muriel offered to postpone her visit to Dutilh, but Worthing could hardly assume to give his imaginary client absent treatment, and he regretfully stuck to his excuse.

"But I hadn't half finished my story," said Muriel. "I'll tell you: my father had to be in town this afternoon for a board meeting. He invited me to dinner with him and a dance somewhere. He's just falling in line, and it's awfully good for him. Would you," Muriel pleaded as if she were asking a charity, "—will you dine with us to-night?"

He graciously consented.

"At eight to-night then? At the Ritz? We'll dine on the roof if you like."

He liked. They parted with a mutual gaze as elastic and as sweet as taffy long drawn out.

II

WHEN Muriel wrenched her eyes from Worthing and entered the shop, it was as if the sun had been suddenly turned out to him. And she was sorry to see him go, of course; but she was zealous for the gown. She walked into the clothes conservatory, and Dutilh assailed her with his usual Mygodding:

"My God, I thought you'd gone

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Chips That Pass *in the Night*

OPIE READ and Bret Harte—the country hasn't produced any more like them. Their work is flavored by a joy in the telling of a story. We rejoice every time we offer you a new story by this best loved of American writers.

By Opie Read

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK B. HOFFMAN

WHEN I got up from the poker table in Houston to catch an early morning train, I was seventy dollars to the good. This victory was unusual, I might say, almost unprecedented. It was my unfortunate habit to linger too long; and it was only the necessity of leaving that now forced me to quit winner, for rare it is that a run of luck runs long.

Cards, like salmon, run fat, spawn and come lean.

"Don't let your conscience hurt you," spoke up a member of the party, shuffling the cards. In winning, his digestion was mighty, but losing, he was as dyspeptic as a theological student in a boarding-house presided over by an aristocratic but distressed widow. "You'll more than bring us back our money. We are only lending you that seventy on short call, you understand, and we are just as sure of it as if it were on the table right now." Then

he grew sarcastic: "There's no way for you to beat the game, and you know that we know it."

Then quoth a state agricultural commissioner: "I wouldn't take sixty dollars for my share of it, and I've got a carload of seed corn out there that I expect you to pay for."

Up spoke a little red-haired fellow with an offensive leer and a ducking of the head like a hell-diver: "You never have to take a train except when you're ahead of the game, and when you want to know when to quit I should think you'd be less hypocritical if you'd look at your stack of chips instead of your watch."

I smiled, though sadly, for I felt that the rascals spoke with cause for faith in the return of their money. I knew, also, that no "good fellow" can quit winner. When he loses he is generous and so witty that his tritest saying is a keen jest to the table; but winner, they mumble reproaches at him, nor does he have to listen attentively to catch such words as *piker* and *grafter*.

The speculator's dollar may be restless for investment, but the poker-won dollar clamors to change hands; and the reason that the gambler often acquires a name for liberality is that if there be no game within sight, his money has no especial worth.

Instinctively and surely by experience I knew that another hour given to the "stay-in" and the "draw," and I should be sitting back from the table, broke, snapping my watch to bite off the swollen feet of slow and drowsied time.

MY journey coiled up abruptly in a small town known for its genial society and a state penitentiary. It lay in the woods, off the main line, sighingly reached over a branch road equipped with a thin sprinkling of cross-ties and with an occasional rail missing.

"These features," said the conductor, inhabitant of the town and given to civic pride, "are big in our favor. They cause a fellow to be glad to get here and to hate to leave."

But I had to get out that night, and as it was the long established custom of

the road not to risk its train in the woods after dark, I was forced to drive across, seven miles, to a station on the trunk line. The old fellow who essayed the rôle and, you might say, the tumble of the achievement, was of a type that is now swiftly passing away forever. Tall and gaunt, with a countenance tinged with melancholy yellow, he was a distressful scarecrow, until he laughed, and then all his wrinkles and bristly hairs broke out in a riot of mirth. I have never seen a human being so distinctly two, one the bare-bones of grim and sorrowful brooding, the other a whooping scorner of gravity. Out of his thin chest came the mournful information that his name was George Washington Potts, as he held up his lantern to reveal his mule and rattle-trap, vaguely reminiscent of a wagon; and when I asked him if I could indulge a hope that the thing might fail to fall to pieces and spill me in the road, he laughed and whooped, and rattled his bones, staggering about till I took hold of him.

While he was making sure of his harness, with the end of a strap in his mouth, I asked him if he thought that we were going to have rain. He spat out the leather and gave the answer not only expected but demanded of the witty in his neighborhood: "If we don't, we'll have a mighty long dry spell."

Then he leaned to and shook both wagon and mule in his mirth.

Mr. Potts could be silent, and he was, as we rattled along, not so much out of respect for the mood of his passenger as of consultation of his own whim.

From a hilltop the penitentiary flashed its electric lights, and I thought that Mr. Potts fetched a long sigh as he inquired:

"Ever in one of them 'ar places? I mean was you ever shet up in one for keeps?"

Assured that I had dodged that misfortune, he was silent for a time, flapping the old mule's back with his lines, and then he added: "Lucky! I was, right up thar. But I reckon you never gambled none."

Like a black bat my mind was circling that game in Houston, but to avoid explanation I lied to him.

"Wall, I have," he said; "and that's what put me up thar. If a man's born to it, I reckon he can gamble and still be what they call a gentleman, but it's different with us po' folks: no matter how much we may believe in the Lawd and Him—Him—what do they call it—what they done to Him?"

"Crucified?"

"Yes, that's it."

"Then it was gambling that put you there?"



"Right up thar in a cell at night, and plenty of hard work in the day-time. Yep, my trouble was the trouble that ails 'em all, I reckon—went back to the game after I'd won and quit—back to it because I thought luck had decided to trot for a while with me as my side pardner."

For a time he drove in silence, through the dark. I waited.

"I'd been a sinner man," he said, "jest like all fellers that aint been washed in the founting, as the preacher 'lows, but I wa'n't no wuss nor the rest of 'em, jest a little pearter, mebbe, when it come to cards and dice. But one night at a meetin' the conviction come down on me, and with my knees knockin' together I went up to the mourners' bench and

"If
"man's
born to
it, I reckon
on he can
gamble and
still be what they
call a gentleman,
but it's different
with us po' folks."

drapped right down, thereby showin' my willin'ness to swallow any sort of medicine the Lawd might see fittin' to give me. Ever waller on a mourners' bench?"

"Well, I know what you mean."

"Mebbe so. They do sift sulphur down on a feller, but I jedge it's the only way the world can be saved. And I want to tell you thar's love thar as well as fear, for I looked up and catch sight of Mose Cate, a feller I had laid

out to knife if I ever got the chance; and sir, the fust thing I knowed I didn't have nuthin' ag'in' him, an' I got up an' tuck him by the hand, an' I says, says I, 'Mose, whenever you git outin' tobacker let me know.' Mose gripped me hard, he did, an' says:

"'George, whoop her up an' you'll git thar finally. I did, an' I aint stold a hog since.'

"Wal, I come through all right, an' j'ined the church, an' it seemed that everybody was tickled, an' Nate Jimison put his hand on my shoulder, an' to show his confidence in me he says, says he, 'George, I've tuck the lock off'n my hen-house do'."

"This showed that he had confidence in my religion sho' nuff; an' now do you know what they done, Cap'n? They made me a trusty, I mean a trustee of the church. An' this made me so proud that I wouldn't 'a' stold a jug of lick at a county fair. Well, it went on this way for a year, an' I was certain that my feet had been tuck out of the mud an' set on the flat rock; an' thar wa'n't a man in the neighborhood that could outshout me when a mourner came through.

"Yas, sah; an' one Sunday a great honor an' a great trust was put on me: I was app'inted to take fifty dollars that the congregation raised, an' to go to Houston to buy hymn-books for the church; an' when this was made knowed to me I felt like somebody done lit a candle in my breast. Well, sah, with that fifty pinned in my side pocket, while in my lower jeans thar was fifteen bucks of my own money, I got on the train feelin' richer in money an' confidence than I ever felt befo'; an' the candle in my breast was bright like the creek when the sun fust hits it in the mornin'. But man as sich aint got a damn bit of sense, has he?"

"I think not, but move on a little faster with your story."

"It aint a story, Cap'n; it's the devil's own truth; an' no matter who else has made promises they aint never cotch ol' Satan in a lie yit. He'll fool you but he wont lie to you. Wall, I got thar about twelve, an' I thinks I'll go an' git me a bite to eat, bein' haungry; but when I got off'n the train I diskivered I wa'n't

haungry a-tall, an' yit, thar was some-thin' a-gnawin' in me; an' all of a sudden I felt that the candle in my breast had been blowed out. But whar was I walkin' to all this time? Sho'ly I wa'n't goin' in the direction of the place whar they kept hymn-books, an' I says to my legs, 'I jest want to see whar you are takin' me to;' an' Cap'n; I soon seed, for I fotch up in front of a dive of a place, an' I then ricollected that in thar the last time I was in town nearly two years befo' I had won ten dollars in a poker game an' in order to ketch a train had been compelled to quit while I had the thing by the tail. An' thar I was, standin' right in front of the very place. Why, Cap'n, if I'd been lookin' for it I bet I couldn't er found it to save my life; an' then I ricollected, standin' thar, that the ten of the fifteen of my own money I had in my pocket was the very same ten I had won.

"Cap'n, money you take out of a game will flutter like a fish to git back an' will flop in all the other money you happen to have with you. Don't you believe I didn't fight; I fit, I tell you. I knowd who was a-temptin' of me, an' I says, 'Git behind me, Satan;' an' he did, but he kep' shovin' me forward, an' then I says, 'You son-of-er'—no matter what I called him, but I says 'Git around in front of me; I want to see what you air doin';' and he did. He got in front, flung his hooks back, cotch me an' led me right up the steps, a-sayin':

"'You po' fool, aint you got no sand? If you quit winner wunst, can't you do it again? Aint you got fifteen dollars of yo' own money an' aint you yo' own boss? Suppose you go home with fifty dollars: you can buy you a hoss an' ride aroun' like a generman, you weak-kneed fool;' an' befo' I could say a word he had done led me into the room whar the poker chips was a-rattlin'. Thar they was, the same fellers that was thar befo', an' how glad they was to see me! One feller he 'lows, he does, 'George, I hearn you j'ined the church,' an' another feller he says, 'Wall, that's all right, aint it? J'inin' the church don't mean that a man must bury his talent under a bushel. Set down, George; the game's easy.'

"'No, thank you,' I says. 'I jest thought I'd drap up to see how you fellers air gittin' along;' an' a little duck-headed chap he ups an' 'lows, 'Didn't know but you'd come to fetch us back the money you robbed us of some time ago. But if the church has white-washed yo' liver, w'y, I aint got nothin' mo' to say. Deal the cards, Bill.'

"Then Bill says, says he, shufflin' the cards, 'Don't be too hard on George. He's a good feller even if he is weak an' don't 'zactly know his own mind;' an' ol' Satan he whispers hot in my year, 'You air a bigger coward than I tuck you for. The game's straight; you know that, an' you've got as good a chance to win as any of 'em. Quit the last time on risin' luck, didn't you?'

"'Deal me a hand, fellers, an' fix me out with a fifteen-dollar stack,' says I, my blood a-leapin' like a fish in a net.

"'Now you're shoutin',' says the duck-headed feller; an' I sot down amongst 'em. Fust hand I picked up was a jack full, an' I says under my quick breath, 'You air comin' of it putty strong for a starter,' lookin' suspicious at the dealer. 'But,' says I, 'here goes, for I'm goin' to feel of you anyhow.' So I opens the pot, careless like, an' they all passed but Duck-head, an' he gives me a swift look an' then said he found it his moral duty to society to boost me five. My knees trembled, for I was afraid the game might have gone crooked, but I saw his raise an' waited. He drewed one card, an' he blinked when I stood pat. He looked hard at his hand after the draw, pinchin' the corners of the cards, an' then says he, 'What about it?'

"I tossed in a white chip, an' he lifted me five, the limit, an' I felt like I'd eat somethin' that didn't agree with me, but I called him, an' he showed down a ace high flush; an' when with a swipe I spread out my jack full, he snapped like a houn' snappin' at a hoss-fly, shoved the pot over to me an' tore up his cards.

"By this time I seed that the game hadn't turned crooked, an' I sets back, I does, waitin' for whatever mout happen, the chips in front of me warmin' me like a fire. 'I told you so,' ol' Satan whispered in my year, an' I 'pologized to him for callin' of him a hard name.

"Settin' jest across from me was a man that looked like a ol' mink, black whiskers with a sort of frost on 'em; an' I seed that he had mo' chips than anybody else, an' I noticed, too, that he pinched his cards tight, an' I knowed that he had stacked up his pile with close grubbin'. The deal went on, an' Mink would look at his hand an' pass, time an' ag'in, till atter while he passed up an' then tilted me when I opened. I had three gals, queens you'd call 'em, but they sartinly looked angels from Geeruzlum to me, an' I ups an' gives him the other bar'l quicker'n a cat's sneeze. He looked at me, the thin kiverin' of frost on his whiskers sort er meltin' like, an' riz to the tune of my tilt. I drewed right down to the gals, two papers, an' he done the same, by which I jedged that he held three little grains of cawn, ez the Book says. But what was the warm suthin' risin' within me an' a-overflowin' of my heart like the balmin' giljum, as the preacher says? Cap'n, it was the fo'th gal that had fell into my han'. Mink, he looked at me as I tuck my time, an' says, says he;

"Aint paralyzed, air you?'

"'Wall,' I says, 'I'm able to lean up ag'in' the fence,' and with that I sluffed five into the pot. Zip, he come back with a five raise; an' when finally he called on his four sevens, all the birds in the universe turned loose their songs. Mink cussed me as he shoved back—swore an' be damned ef he ever played with white trash without gittin' the wust of it; an' I let him cuss, fur it's sweet to be cussed when you win.

"Wall, I made up my mind not to stay too long, and I cashed in eighty dollars winner an' went down. It was night an' I knowed the hymn-book house wa'n't open, so I goes into a place to git me suthin' to eat, richer'n I'd ever been befo' in my life; an' when the nigger he come up to the table, I says keerless like, 'Fetch me a dozen or so of br'iled mawkin' birds an' some gold fish fried in maple merlasses.' The nigger was a imbertent scoun'l; he 'lows:

"'Will dat be all, Mr. Rockefeller? I didn't know,' says he, 'but you mout want some haug's feet an' cawn braid fur 'zert.'



She sat down, easing the child to a comfortable position on her knee.

"The nigger sort er had me, an' I told him he mout fetch me some ham hocks an' cabbage; but you know, Cap'n, I didn't taste a thing I chawed? My mind was on that game. 'But,' I says to myself, 'you've got enough to buy six acres of ground right whar you rent ever' year. Go to bed, git yo' hymn-books to-morrow, go home an' be a land owner for the rest of yo' days.' But thar was ol' Satan, sah, a-standin' right behin' my cheer; an' he says, says he, like stickin' splinters into my year, 'I've forked many a fool but you ar the biggest one I ever hope to han'le. Stoppin' with a few acres of land when you might jest as well own a plantation. Go back home a po' man, an' of a Sunday drive the haugs out from under the church so the fleas wont eat the preacher up, when you mout be the biggest man in the neighborhood—remainin' a white trasher when you mout be a colonel.'

"I sot thar a-chawin' of my ham hocks, but I couldn't shake out the splinters that ol' Satan had driv into my years with his breath. 'After all,' I argues, 'who is it that gits thar except the man that keeps on a-tryin'?' Then ol' Satan he says, 'Ever know of a crown laid up for a quitter?' And right thar I couldn't answer him, for all the crowns I ever hearn about was promised to them as persevere, as the preacher says.

"Wall, I went out of thar into the street, not pickin' the direction I was a-goin', an' the fust thing I knows I am a-standin' at the foot of the stairs a-leadin' up to that poker game. I turns about, I does, as if I could look into the countenance of Satan, an' I asks him a p'int blank question: 'I want to know if I am goin' to win?' An' he snickers an' says, 'Did win, didn't you?' 'Yes,' I says, 'but tell me as a friend, an' you mout need a friend befo' you die, if—' But I had a sudden feelin' that he was gone, an' he was.

"Cap'n, I am goin' to cut this thing short, for we aint fur from yo' station. But I went back up them stairs, an' thar sot the same gang, an' they smiled at me, an' one of 'em give me a cigar that must have been wuth a nickel of any man's money. But Lawd, how many things can happen while the clock

'pears to be standin' still! Three big pots, an' all the money I'd won together with the nest aig of the fifteen was gone; an' I sot thar a-seein' of Duck-head an' the Mink a-puttin' of my vitals into their stacks. An' then I felt that hymn-book money a-throbbin' in my breast. It didn't stop at this throbbin' but begins to scratch an' claw to git out, an' I could 'a' swore that I had buttoned up a live cat in my coat. The cat scratched out, an' thar I was in the game ag'in, with hope a-leapin' from one card to another. Finally I picked up a king full, pat, an' when Mink raised me I thought the blood of gladness would spurt out of my years. I got all my money in an' sot back to see Mink draw two cards. But when we spread down, my heart stopped beatin' an' I didn't think it would ever beat ag'in. Mink had four tens. Down the stairs I fumbled my way. Cap'n, I walked around all night, an' the next mornin' I sot out for home, afoot. Sore an' sick, I got home of a Sunday while the folks was all a-goin' to church, an' I gathered all my strength an' went too, an' prayed harder, I bet you, than any man in that house. But I had to stand up in thar and tell a lie. I told 'em that thar had lately been so much religion through the country that the hymn-books was all out, but that I had paid for 'em an' the house would send 'em as soon as they could be printed. Then the heaviest days that the world ever seen sot in. An' one day the committee come over with a letter from the house. It said they had somethin' mo' than five tons of hymn books on hand that they were willin' to sell for cost. They said, also, that I never had been thar. Then I confessed the whole thing, an' told 'em the part the devil had played. But aint it curious how little faith the average church member has in the temptation an' the traps set by the devil whenever anybody but themselves are concerned?

"Wall, they sent me to the penitentiary for a year an' then forgave me. Here we are at yo' station, Cap'n; an' I jest want to say one more word: If I had any money that had been won in a poker game, I'd grease it an' throw it to the hogs."

And when I scrambled down from his rig he added: "Good-by, an' I wish you mighty well."

IT was a desperately dreary place, with the chill wind moaning among the pines, a night-hawk screaming in hungry solitude; and from nowhere came there ever a human sound—yes, from the waiting-room, a slow scuffling of feet. I entered, a dismal and dusty hole, yellow-gloomed with an oil lamp. On one bench sat three men, and passing them I sat down on the far bench, almost choked by the dust raised by their restless feet. When I had looked back at them I saw that they were garbed in the new and flimsy garments furnished by the state to men who have just served out their time in the penitentiary.

The lamp was burning low. I turned it up to brighter blaze. I inquired if they knew whether the trains were on time, and one of them gave me an unenlightening grunt. (I fancied that he could have scuttled a ship with one hand while cutting the throat of the chaplain with the other).

The train was now already past due. I listened but could catch no rumble of its coming. The wind howled, rattled at the door-latch, harder—no, not the wind, a young woman. She came in, a child hugged up close to her, and I saw that she too wore the flimsy fabric furnished by the state. The men nodded to her, moved to make room for her on the bench, and she sat down, easing the child to a comfortable position on her knee. The little thing laughed and crew, pink and joyous heritage of shame.

"Boy?" inquired the ruffian who had glanced at me.

"Yes," she nodded.

"Goin'—er—home?"

"Got none," she said; and the little one crew and laughed.

"Whut you goin' to do?"

"Work in a sugar mill over in Louisiana if I can git that fur."

"That's hell," said the ruffian.

"Yes," she moaned. "An' I told 'em I'd rather stay at the pen, but they said my time was out an' I'd have to go."

And there I sat with seventy adventurous dollars in my pocket, throbbing

to get back into the game. Then came a swift determination. There was one way to beat those adventurous rascals and their cards. Getting up quickly while my resolve was hot, I walked over and said to the woman: "Madam, I have here some money that really does not belong to me. But no matter how I came by it, I think we can now make it serve a good and honest purpose. I am going to give it to the boy."

Dazed, she looked at me, unable to catch my meaning, her wistful eyes searching me with hollow look, but the boy broke forth with a gladsome crow, as if he understood me, and held up his hand; and about the soft roll of velvet once so harsh and throbbing, I closed his tiny fingers. Then she sobbed out her gratitude, and to her frail bosom pressed the money and the child. I returned to my bench and sat down. The ruffian said, "I think the train is a good deal late, sir."

I agreed, and now as I looked at him he seemed to have reached out somewhere and drawn unto himself an air of peculiar gentleness. He smiled, played with the boy, went out to listen for the train, soon returning with the news that he heard it coming, about three miles away. I went out upon the platform, the woman following, seeking in vain search for words to thank me, the men tramping hard behind her; and when the headlight blazed upon us, the poor creature turned to me and said: "Would you let me shake hands with you, sir?"

Well, I got away the best I could, got into the sleeper, and was waiting for the porter to make down my berth, musing with eyes closed, when some one spoke to me. I looked up, and there stood the ruffian who had grunted. I bade him sit down, but he shook his head.

"Just wanted to say a few words to you," he explained, and then looking about him, he added: "First time I've been in one of these things since I robbed one. Just finished time for it, back yonder. I used to live about fifty miles from here, had a good job an' married the puttiest woman I ever saw—too putty, Colonel. She ran away with a big gambler from New Orleans. Then

I drifted, added lick to trouble
an' drifted faster. And the
first train I ever robbed,
there she sat in the
sleeper. She didn't
know me, for I
had a black
swipe across
my face, but
you bet I
knewed her.
She jumped
up with a
scream,
an' I saw
her drop

a roll of bills and kick 'em under the
seat. I didn't want her money,—I
wouldn't have touched a cent that had
ever been in her hand,—but she had
something that I did want—a diamond
star that had been give to her by that
hound, and there she was, wearin' it
on her bosom. I snatched it off, dropped
it on the floor, and with my heel I
ground it into glitterin' dust. But
that aint what I come back here to tell
you. I jest wanted to say that me and
the boys had it fixed to rob you an'
leave you in the station, but when you
give the wad to the kid—well, we weak-
ened. That's all. I'll go up now and
see how the fellers are makin' it. So
long."

I had beaten the game.



She didn't know me, for I had a
black swipe across my face, but you
bet I knowed her.

A Thief in the Night

THERE is powerful, swift-moving drama in this story: the theme for a novel compressed into eleven magazine pages.

By Albert Payson Terhune

Author of "Dollars and Cents," "Whose Wife?" etc.

I L L U S T R A T E D B Y J H E N R Y

CÆSAR LEBRUN had the shoulders of a piano mover and the thighs of a troglodyte. He had a beautiful wife and a huge law practice. He had also a brother, who was one of the six foremost surgeons in America.

The Lebruns' father, a Frenchman exiled by the third Napoleon, had drifted to New York in the late 60's, and had taken thrifty root there. There, too, his sons had been born and reared; two men as unlike as light and darkness, yet with souls knit together with a perfect love and comradeship.

The Lebrun brethren were of a height, but Cæsar's mighty frame and leonine blond head made him seem a full hands-breadth taller than his dark, wiry brother, the surgeon.

They lived only a few doors apart, in a broad street off Central Park, and their summer homes in New Jersey adjoined each other.

In the very early spring, one year, Dr. Louis Lebrun closed his town house and went to the country to get rid of an obstinate fit of insomnia that threatened to wreck his perfect nerve. He left his practice in the hands of his assistant and came to the city only now and then, for some all-important operation. On such visits he stayed at Cæsar's home. The lawyer-brother, having just then to adjust an estate in which they both were interested, was wont to run out to New Jersey for a night every week or so, to

consult with Louis and to get his signature for certain legal papers.

The lawyer's wife was fond of society. The lawyer wasn't. Thus their social life was a solo rather than a duet.

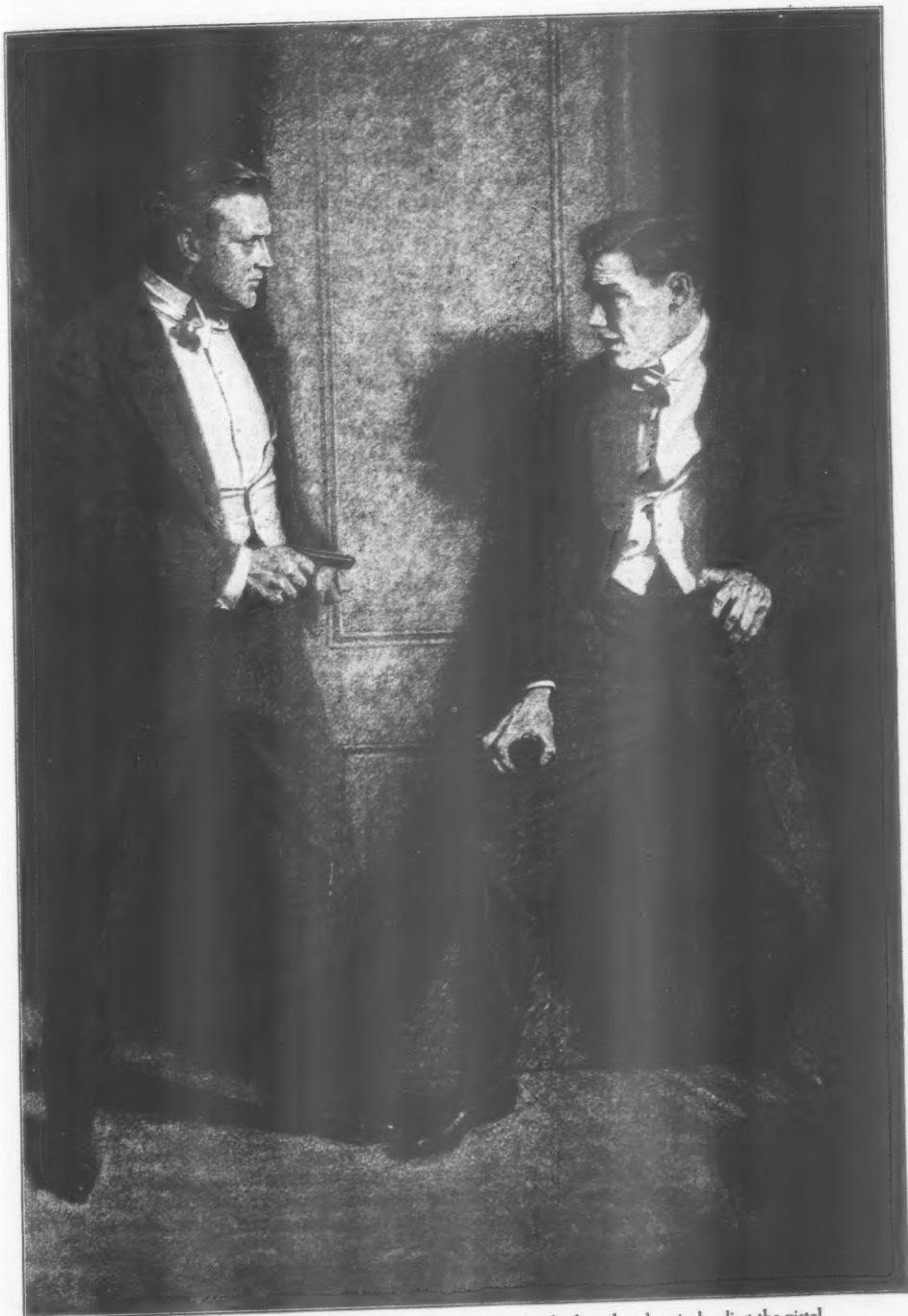
So much for "what happened before the curtain rose."

IT was half an hour after midnight when the two brothers scrambled out of a taxi in front of Cæsar's door. The doctor carried his well-worn black bag and a large valise. Cæsar mounted the steps ahead of his brother, fumbling for his latchkey as he went. A light was burning in the front hall as Cæsar swung open the door. And, a little to his surprise, a soft light glowed through the curtains that screened the library door, farther down the hall.

"We are back, both of us," he hailed cheerily, as he strode across the short foyer. "It is better luck than I thought, to find you up so late, *belle amie*."

Before he finished speaking he thrust aside the curtains and entered the soft-lighted room. Almost on the threshold he paused, taking in with artist appreciation the pretty home scene before him.

The room was large and dark and comfortably furnished. On a magazine-strewn table was its only illumination, a dull golden-shaded lamp. Beside the table sat a woman in evening dress. She was tall, stately, gold-red of hair and of eyes, and with the fair complexion and delicately flushed cheeks that go with



He flung the door wide, in almost the same motion stepping backward and again leveling the pistol.

such coloring of eyes and hair. She was very beautiful.

Her right hand held an open book. Her left rested on a buff Persian cat that sprawled athwart her lap. The cat was perhaps disturbed by Cæsar Lebrun's voice, for instead of lying in feline snugness, it was struggling crossly to escape from its favored position.

The woman rose, dropping the book on the floor and gathering up the cat in one bare arm, and came forward to greet her husband. Cæsar Lebrun had come into the room right boisterously. Yet he advanced no farther, after that involuntary pause. And his deep voice, when he spoke again, seemed to force a joviality which had just now been unfeigned.

"Louis got a telegram at ten o'clock," he said. "It was from McComber. There's an operation, for eight in the morning—a pork magnate who put in at the New York Yacht Club moorings this evening with appendicitis. No train down in time in the morning, so we took the ten-forty. Louis has brought along a most amazing lot of paraphernalia, because the operation's to be on the yacht, not at a hospital—a whim of the sick pork king. I left Louis stacking his bags in the hall. He—Ah!" he broke off, moving aside to make way for his brother. "*Vieux frère*, I was just telling Klyda how we happened to—"

"Will you put up a poor wandering apothecary for the night, pretty sister?" supplemented Louis, pushing past his brother and bending to kiss Mrs. Cæsar Lebrun's hand.

"It's ever so good to see you again, so soon, Louis!" she exclaimed, hospitably. "How lucky I didn't feel sleepy, and sat up to finish that silly book! And, speaking of not feeling sleepy, how's the insomnia?"

"Better, *p'tite belle soeur*," said Louis. "Much better—much, though I still find, when I drink more than one cup of coffee for Sunday morning breakfast, and then go to church, I am apt to toss restlessly from one end of the pew to the other, all through the sermon. And," he continued, passing his long, nervously-strung surgeon-fingers over the buff cat's fur, "here is mine ancient enemy Massoud! Was he sitting up for us too?"

"He was sitting up because I wouldn't put him to bed," laughed Klyda. "And he is giving an imitation of an eel that has had red pepper sprinkled on him. Keep still, Massoud!" she reprimanded, rapping the wiggling Persian on the nose with a punitive forefinger.

The cat replied to this chastisement by a right unloving yowl and made a vain but industrious effort to dig his claws into the white arm that held him.

"Massoud!" said Louis, in tragic reproof. "A cat that would seek to escape from such bonds as yours is as insane as the man who vaulted out over the walls of Paradise."

"There, Cæsar!" exclaimed Klyda, turning reproachfully upon her husband. "Take lessons from your little brother. Why do you never say such pretty things to me, any more?"

Cæsar did not answer at once. His blond brows were knit. He seemed to have fallen into a reverie, standing there just within the threshold of the soft-lit room. His blue eyes were half shut and glassy. With a visible effort he roused himself.

"Yes," he muttered vaguely, "yes. Oh, yes. Happy cat—to be sure!"

Then, forcing himself to speak more naturally, he added:

"Let him down, Klyda. He may claw you. He's a vicious brute. He has the temper of Satan."

"Only to his friends," amended Louis. "He is polite and even inquisitive when there are strangers about. It is only when he gets to knowing one well that he lavishes his viciousness. He saves it all for his friends. Why, when he first came, he used to follow me about and sit patiently just outside my door, for hours. Not till he knew I was one of the family did he drop my acquaintance and resent it with a bite or a line of red furrows when I tried to pick him up—a truly marvelous mental development."

"Put him down, Klyda," repeated Cæsar, a shade of irritation in his voice as the Persian growled throatily and lashed out with a set of unsheathed claws at its mistress.

Klyda set the cat on the floor, glancing inquiringly at her glum husband. The cat, released, walked to the side of

the room farthest from the group, and sat down near the wall with its back to them. Cæsar's eyes followed the beast, moodily.

"And now," went on Klyda, to her brother-in-law, "you're tired and Cæsar's cross. And that means you both ought to be in bed. So should I, for that matter. Cæsar, take Louis up to his room. Don't bother to stay and lock the house; I'll do it. Wake Cerise and tell her to put on fresh sheets for—"

"No," interrupted Cæsar, in the same sulkily imperative voice, "I don't want to rout out any of the servants at this hour. They're tired and they have to get up early. Would you mind, Klyda,—as a favor to me,—fixing up Louis' room yourself? It will take only a few minutes."

"Nonsense!" broke in Dr. Lebrun. "Do you think, *gros bête*, that I'm going to have Klyda wait on me? Show me where the sheets are kept, and I'll—"

"Yes," said Cæsar. "Show him where the sheets are, Klyda, or get them for him. And then, if he insists on not letting you wait on him, at least help him while he makes the bed. If he tries to make it alone, it'll be a torture couch, especially for an insomniac. I'll lock up, and I'll join you in a minute. Run along, you two," he finished, as Klyda hesitated.

She looked at him, as in doubt. Cæsar laughed in her face and, pushing her playfully from the room, and Louis after her, he ordered:

"Now, then, children, when I come up, in sixty seconds, I want to find that bed made—and made in a manner that baffles criticism."

He followed his brother and the reluctant woman out into the hall, and noisily bolted the front door. Then he stood in the foyer and looked up at Klyda and the doctor as they mounted the stairs, Louis talking and laughing as they went.

Cæsar watched them around the turn of the stair. Then the grin was wiped from his face as with a sponge. And he went hurriedly back into the library.

He stood for an instant in the center of the room as though accustoming his eyes once more to the fainter light. He

took in every detail of the tastefully appointed place with a single quick look, his gaze resting last of all on Massoud.

The cat had not moved. It still sat near the wall, its back to him. And he saw it was gazing fixedly at the thick oaken door of a clothes closet, not six inches away from its own aristocratically pink nose.

Moving with a speed and lightness odd in so heavy a man, Cæsar Lebrun stepped back to the doorway and pressed an electric button. Instantly the room glowed with illumination from four electric lamp brackets and from a central electrolier in the ceiling.

Cæsar was already half-way to the library table. Unlocking one of its lower drawers, he drew forth a squat black automatic pistol, a very toad of a weapon, chunky, ugly, sinister.

Leveling the pistol at the closet door, he said, sternly but very quietly:

"Come out."

There was no response. The cat only, turned its head as though in haughty rebuke at so insolent an address, then resumed its patient stare at the closet door.

"Come out—" Cæsar called once more, a little louder this time, adding:

"—unless you'd rather be hauled out by the scruff of the neck."

No reply. Edging noiselessly toward the oaken door, Cæsar continued:

"You can hear me. From that closet; every whisper in this room can be heard. I know because I used to hide there when I was a boy. I—"

With a leap he reached the door and flung it wide, in almost the same motion stepping backward and again leveling the black pistol.

From the deep recesses of the cupboard a man stepped forth.

He was tall, slender, dark of hair, pale of face, clad in correct but at present slightly rumpled evening clothes. He essayed a smile as he confronted the heavy, sinister figure that leveled the heavy, sinister automatic. Massoud, in high dudgeon at having been brushed aside so unceremoniously by the opening of the door, stalked away and blinked yellow-eyed wrath over its shoulder at the unheeding men.

"Well," said Cæsar Lebrun, presently,



She stood petrified, wordless, chained to the threshold.

"'a gentleman burglar,' eh? And in real life! I thought the stage and the 'crook' novels had a copyright on them. A real live burglar, in evening dress."

He spoke raspingly, with a drawling, sardonic humor. His leveled pistol did not waver. Its black muzzle was in a direct line with the intruder's white dress waistcoat.

"You are probably the only one in captivity," went on Cæsar, in the same nasal, ironic voice, drawling his words to the point of ludicrousness. "The only gentleman burglar in captivity! The least I can do is to see that you remain safely in captivity for a number of years to come. You can trust me, I think, to do that. You *are* a burglar, I suppose?" he went on in polite inquiry, "—not a sleepwalker who has strayed in here, or a plumber's helper who happened to be at work around the house to-day and dropped into the closet there for a bit of nap?"

"I—I am a burglar," replied the man, huskily, seeming to drag every word, by sheer strength, through a sanded throat.

"Of course, you are," dryly assented Cæsar, "a burglar caught red-handed—or rather, suspiciously white-handed—in my house, after midnight. How did you get in?"

"I—I broke in, of—of course."

"Of course. I didn't imagine the servants invited you in. You came through the area-way at the side, I suppose, and climbed that little veranda at the rear and let yourself into the library by one of those two unbolted windows? And, hearing some one coming into the room, you slipped into the closet, there, to hide till the coast was clear and you could get at the silver and—and whatever other things gentlemen burglars steal, eh?"

"Yes. I—I came through the area and got in by way of the veranda—"

"I was sure of it!" cried Cæsar as in triumph at his own powers of deduction. "I was certain of it, the more so since there is no area-way and this house has no veranda—in front or rear. Few New York houses have. But that doesn't at all detract from your pretty confession. I can swear, in court, with a clear con-

science, that I caught you here and that you confessed to breaking into my house. That is all I need. By the way,—if the question isn't impertinent,—do you happen to be armed?"

"I—no, I—that is—yes!"

"Come forward here. Keep your hands above your waistline. Sit down in that chair beside you. *Sit down!*"

Cæsar Lebrun barked the command savagely, his well-maintained, drawling irony momentarily wearing thin. The man sat down.

"Lay your hands on the table, there, in front of you," said Cæsar. "So! And keep them there. Now we can talk. I shall not trouble you with a windy oration—all I have to say can be said in a single mouthful of words. All *you* have to say has already been said."

Standing in front of his prisoner, his briefly angered face once more calm and his pistol still poised, Cæsar Lebrun resumed:

"I have never caught a burglar before, so I have no precedent to go by. And your being a 'gentleman burglar,' at that, complicates the case. But I can see only one thing to do, and that's the thing I'm going to do. On the stage, you would outwit me, and the curtain would go down on your clever escape. In a novel, I should be moved to pity by your story and I should give you a job on one of my railroads—if I had one. But in real life, my friend, I am going to do the only sane thing for my own sake and for the sake of society at large. I am going to call up the police and have you taken to the precinct station-house for the night. To-morrow morning, I am going to appear in court against you and again at your trial. I am a man of repute in this community. My word will be taken by any judge and by any jury when I swear I caught you here and that you confessed to me you broke into my house to rob. You will go to State's Prison for a term of years."

Still covering the sitting man with his pistol, Cæsar backed toward a wall-bracket on which stood a telephone.

"Sit tight!" he adjured as, without taking his eyes from the prisoner, he lifted the telephone receiver from the hook. "Don't stir. If you do, I'll pump

every bullet in this gun into you. It would mess up the rugs, but it would save me the bother of wasting time in court. And—*Hello! Give me Spring 3,100,*" he broke off, standing sidewise and speaking across the telephone transmitter.

As he spoke, he noted, of a sudden, that the captive's horror-wide eyes had left his and were fixed on the doorway of the room, close beside the telephone rack. Shifting his own gaze ever so little, Cæsar saw his wife standing between the portières.

Klyda's face was ghastly. Her lips were parted. In her eyes was the look of a fawn whose throat the pack is already mangling. She stood petrified, wordless, chained to the threshold. She was staring at the prisoner and he at her. Save for their eyes, their countenances were masks of frozen terror.

"Ah!" grunted Cæsar. "You've come at last! I was afraid I'd have to halloo for you. Take this receiver," he added, thrusting it into the nerveless hand. "I've got to keep the fellow covered. Don't be scared. He's quite harmless—now. He's a burglar, a gentleman burglar, the kind one reads about. I caught him hiding in the closet yonder. I've just called up Police Headquarters. Tell them to connect you with the precinct station and—"

The receiver fell from her deadened fingers. The jerk of its fall pulled the telephone instrument from its narrow stand, and it fell with a hideous clatter to the hardwood floor.

"How awkward of you!" snapped Cæsar. "Pick it up. I can't. If I stoop, or take my eyes off him, he's liable to draw a gun."

She made no move to obey, but still stood there, dead white, horror-stricken, staring.

"Never mind!" said Lebrun, impatiently. "If you're too scared, at sight of a helpless burglar, to be of any use to me, go and call Louis. He'll attend to everything. Go, can't you?"

Then, as she did not stir, he continued, his brusque tone giving place to a carefully studied gentleness:

"There, there! I don't wonder you're startled, you poor girl. I'm sorry if I

spoke roughly; but if you're scared just at sight of him, what will you be when I tell you he was hidden in the closet all the time you were sitting in here alone? Yes, *all* the time. Isn't that true?" he demanded of the prisoner.

The latter nodded, speechless.

"You see," explained Cæsar, "the moment I came into this room I smelt cigarette smoke. I hate the smell, as you very well know. *You* don't smoke cigarettes; neither do I; neither does anyone else in this house. And I knew one of the servants hadn't sneaked in here for a quiet smoke, for they're all in bed, hours ago. And this smoke was fresh. I can still smell it. It set me to thinking.

"Then I saw you were holding your book upside down, so I knew you must have been dozing and that you had started up at sound of my latchkey. I figured that perhaps the cigarette smoker had crept in here and hidden somewhere while you were asleep; and I began to look around. Massoud helped me. You remember what Louis said about the miserable cat's fondness for strangers and the way it used to sit outside Louis' own door? Well, it sat down just in front of the closet door, as if the door were a rat-hole."

Lebrun had spoken fluently, vain-gloriously, carelessly. But once or twice, for the merest fraction of an instant, as he talked, his glance had shot from the captive to Klyda.

The woman had not moved. Her face, was almost ugly, from the terror that convulsed it.

Suddenly the prisoner gave a violent start, and his overstrung nerves fell to trembling. Massoud, recovering from the momentary indignation at being shoved aside, had advanced toward the sitting man and had rubbed its furry arched back against the calf of his leg. The unexpected contact had caused the jump and the shudder that followed.

"A gentleman burglar should have better nerves—and better nerve," commented Lebrun. "You are worse than my wife—in the matter of fright, I mean," he added. Then: "Klyda, pull yourself together, can't you, and go up and call Louis. He—"

The telephone on the floor began to buzz with that peculiar noise occasioned by the receiver being off the hook. Its noise brought Klyda to her senses.

"Cæsar!" she gasped brokenly. "Don't! You *mustn't*! Oh—let him go! Let him go!"

"Let him go?" echoed Lebrun, his face purpling as he spoke, and the veins standing out swollen and knotted on his temples. "Let him go? Are you crazy? He is a burglar. He says so himself. Why should I let him go? When I let him go, it will be to prison—where the crook belongs."

"No!" she panted. "No!"

"Why not?" he asked abruptly.

She strangled for speech, but no words came.

"He broke into my house," said Cæsar, his voice deep as a growling dog's, and vibrating with emotion



"Let him go," she wailed.
"Oh, for my sake, Cæsar, let him go!"

thief—or," he finished, "for his possible accomplices."

She shook from head to foot and threw out one bare arm against the wall to steady herself.

"You—you don't understand!" she moaned. "You *can't* understand."

"What don't I understand?" he mocked, the solemnity in his voice changing all at once to scoffing. "What don't I understand, my true and loving wife? Don't I understand that he is a thief? Don't I understand, past all doubt, since you came into the room just now, that he is the type of thief to whom one should show the same mercy as to a mad dog?"

he could
not wholly
keep in leash. "He
broke into my house at
dead of night, to rob me. This house
holds all that I deem—that I *have*
deemed—most precious in life. He
came to rob me of that. What mercy
is there for a thief in the night? A
thousand times less for this brand of

"Let him go!" she wailed. "Oh, for my sake, Caesar, let him go. For my sake—"

The blaze of light that swirled into his blue eyes choked her plea.

"For your sake?" he repeated, his voice muffled and almost unintelligible. "For your sake? Yes?"

He fought for composure for an instant; then, his teeth set hard, he spoke to the burglar.

"This lady," said he, "is my wife. Never having seen her before, you couldn't be expected to know that. But she is, and she is interceding for you. She pities you. That is the divine quality of her divine sex—pity for a complete stranger. It is divine! She doesn't want me to send you to prison—so I won't."

The man caught his breath; Klyda sought to speak, but again, in the reaction, words were denied her.

"Get up!" ordered Caesar.

The man rose.

"Put up your hands! 'Way up! High! Over your head! So!"

Menacing the captive with the black pistol muzzle under his very nose, Caesar followed up his sharp-uttered commands with others:

"Step backward! Again! Again! Again! Once more! So!"

Menacing the man with his automatic, Caesar Lebrun kept close to him at every backward move. At the final step, the intruder found himself in the doorway of the closet.

Lebrun placed an open palm on the man's chest and with a single thrust sent him tottering back against the closet wall. Then, slamming shut the heavy door upon the captive, he locked it and pocketed the key.

"There are gaps at the top and bottom of that door," he remarked to Klyda, "so he can breathe—and hear. But it will take a stronger man than he to break the panels or force the locks. Our fathers built doors for practical use, in the old days."

"You said," she faltered, "—you said you weren't going to—"

"To send him to prison? I'm not. I'm going to redeem him, for your sake, because you interceded for him—for that reason alone. But for your appeal, I'd have had him on his way to jail by now.

Since you're so interested in him, I'm going to save the poor fellow; I'm going to save him—from himself."

"I—oh, I don't understand you."

"I got the idea, all in a flash, while you were begging for him. I got it from something Louis once told me. He says that burglars are not normal. He says a pressure of some sort on their skulls makes them criminals, and that when the pressure is removed—by a surgical operation known as 'trephining'—they become normal men and good citizens. For your dear sake and by Louis' help, I am going to make this thief normal."

"You are going to—to—?"

"I'm going to ask Louis to operate on his skull, here and now. Louis has all the appliances he can need, and this table is long enough."

As he talked, he lifted the table lamp to a window seat and swept clear the huge table itself, of its litter of magazines and books. The woman stared in horrified fascination.

"I am not at all sure the plan will work," he was saying. "Sometimes it does not, Louis says. Sometimes the operation is a success, but the patient dies before finding it out. Something tells me this may be one of those sad cases. I'll know better after I have talked with Louis."

"Caesar!" she cried. "You—you mean you two are going to murder him?"

"Murder him?" he gibed. "One doesn't murder a rabid dog; one puts him out of the way. And one is thanked for doing it."

"You—you wouldn't dare!" she babbled.

"No? Why not? If he dies, we'll go through his clothes and find out who he is. There are certain to be cards or letters on him. Then the story will go out that he was calling on me this evening and suddenly was seized with a cerebral hemorrhage. My brother, who chanced to be here, declared that only an immediate operation could save him. So he operated, but it was too late. That will be the story, and, backed by the famous Dr. Louis Lebrun's certificate, it will be believed by everyone from the coroner down. You know it will. I am going up to tell Louis, now. You can go or stay, as you choose."

He left the room, and Klyda heard his tread on the stairs. She ran to the closet and tugged frantically at the unyielding door, her breath coming in choked sobs.

"It is no use," presently came the man's voice from the other side of the panels. "I have thrown my whole weight against it. It won't stir."

"But, Jim!" she wept. "I *must* get you out! You—you heard?"

"Yes, I'm done for—if he can persuade his brother to do such a mad thing. My only hope is that he can't."

"Don't hope it!" she sobbed. "You don't know my husband; you don't know Louis; you don't know the French. With French people, the family is everything. Why, Cæsar's cousin, in Tours, gave up his whole fortune to save his nephew from bankruptcy. And Cæsar's grandfather traveled across the world to kill the man who had wrecked his sister's life. With them, the family and family honor are everything. Louis would avenge Cæsar if he had to go to the electric chair for it. He loves him as if—"

"But are you sure—are you perfectly sure—he knows?"

"Who? Cæsar? Of course he knows. I saw that the moment I looked in his face. He knows everything; and he *believes* a hundred times more. Oh, *why* did I let you come here?"

"How could we know he would come home? You told me he said he wouldn't be back, till—"

"I know, I know. Tell me, Jim. What can I do? Shall I telephone to—?"

"No." This time the voice beyond the door was firmer. "No! I came here, and I must pay the bill even though I'm paying for—nothing. I saw what I'd have to do, the instant he found me. I made up my mind I'd have to go to prison. It was easier than to be shot. But I wish I could help you."

"Don't think of *me*!" she wept. "Think of yourself. You *shan't* die for my folly in letting you—"

"I'm not going to die for any folly of yours," he answered, hoarsely. "I suppose the moralists would say I'm to die for my own sin."

"Sin? There *was* no sin! It—"

"That was not my fault. When I begged you to let me call here this even-

ing after the opera, and when you said I might, I put just one construction on it. I couldn't know you let me come only through pique at a quarrel with your husband, and through a childish impulse of coquetry. I believed you cared. I believed it until you told me to-night in so many words that you *didn't* care and when at last you ordered me to go. Lord!" he muttered, in grim disgust. "If you had told me three minutes earlier, I'd have got clear before they saw me, and I wouldn't have had to bolt into a closet like a comedian in a French farce. Don't cry for me, dear. I took the chance with death—as every man takes it who tries to steal another man's wife—and I lost. I'm going to take my medicine, not because I want to, but because I've got to."

"Oh, let me telephone! I can get—"

"You can't. No one could get here in time, and, besides, it would ruin you forever."

"Ruin me forever!" she sobbed, hysterically. "I am lost, already. If Cæsar chooses this way of punishing *you*, what will he do to *me*?"

"Then I'll tell him why I came here and how I misunderstood you, and the way you turned me out."

"He would never believe you. 'Oh, if I had had the courage to tell him! But I knew he wouldn't believe—'"

She stopped short. The portières swung wide, and Cæsar and Louis Lebrun came in. Cæsar was carrying his brother's satchel and valise. Louis was clad all in white.

"Put the valise here," he said to Cæsar, pointing toward a chair and speaking as if to a hospital orderly. "Then open the case and lay out the instruments that I've put in the top layer."

"Louis!" broke in Klyda, seizing his hands. "Louis! For God's sake—"

With no show of roughness, yet with the incredible wiry strength of a surgeon's hands, he released himself from her clutch and turned back to the table without speaking to her. There, he began to arrange the ice-bright instruments his brother had just laid out for him. Cæsar leaned back against the wall to await further orders. The pistol, which he had thrust into his pocket, pressed

annoyingly against his body. Mechanically, he drew it out and laid it on a corner of the table. Looking up from his work, Louis said:

"Bring him here."

Klyda had sprung forward again, this time to intercept her husband. Cæsar put her aside and unlocked the door. The prisoner, not waiting for a command, came out into the room. His face was green-white, and sweat trickled down his forehead. But his slender shoulders were squared, and his eye met Cæsar's with tolerable steadiness.

Then, as he moved forward, his glance fell on the forgotten pistol. Darting at it with the speed of lightning, he caught up the weapon from the table corner, pointed it and backed slowly toward the door, keeping in a line with the two Lebruns. The brothers stood dumfounded, moveless, wholly taken aback at this new shift of the scales.

"Mrs. Lebrun—Klyda!" said the man, hurriedly. "Come! I'll hold them while you get out. *Quick!*"

"Come?" she repeated, dazedly. "Where?"

"With me!—to happiness, to love—to the future that's waiting for us!"

"For us?" she made answer. "There is no future waiting anywhere for—us. I told you that, to-night."

"If you stay here they may kill you!" he urged, wildly. "Think what they were going to do to me! Come!"

"I am not coming," she insisted, her voice drearily unemotional. "If I refused to go away with you of my own accord, I'm not going now, and under fear of death. There are worse things than dying. One of them would be life with a man I can't care for. Even if I went, it wouldn't be with you, and I would come back again. I know I would."

"To that murderous brute?"

"It is where I belong. I told you that. I told you so, when you asked me before."

"This is sheer insanity!" he raved. "Can't you see everything has changed since I came here this evening? Then I begged you to leave Lebrun, for me, and you refused because you said you loved him and didn't love me. But now

you *can't* stay with him. He'll kill you—as he'd have killed me—he and his devil of a brother. (Keep still, there, both of you! If you move again I'll open fire!) You can't stay with him, Klyda, and after what's happened, you surely can't love him. I offer you—everything—*everything*, Klyda!"

"So you told me, just before Cæsar came home," she returned, "and I gave you your answer then; and I ordered you to leave my husband's house."

"Be patient, Klyda," spoke up Cæsar. "He has had his answer, and he is leaving. But do you mind telling me why, if you rejected those pleasantly honorable advances of his, he hid in the closet instead of standing his ground?"

"Because you were the husband," sneered the man, "and because I lost my head. One does, at midnight, when the husband comes home."

"Does one?" queried Cæsar, in genuine interest. "I must bow to your greater experience. To a mere low-brow, like me, it seems queer—and a little degrading—that any man should put himself in a position to be so afraid of any other man—as afraid as you were of me, for example; as afraid as you still are of me, for all you're armed and I'm not. Klyda," he said, turning to his wife, "I'm sorry. We're both sorry, aren't we? Sha'n't we put 'Cæsar's wife above suspicion' again?"

"Oh!" she cried, unbelieving. "You don't mean that you—?"

"I mean I came downstairs ahead of Louis to make sure our friend hadn't escaped. I—I never played eavesdropper before. I wish I could regret I did it, then. But I can't. Good night, Mr. Gentleman Burglar. The operation is indefinitely postponed. But I'll trouble you for my pistol before you go," he continued, advancing as he spoke. "I'd rather like to keep it as a relic."

"Stop where you are!" shouted the man, nervously. "Stop or I'll shoot—!"

"Shoot?" echoed Cæsar with one of his big explosive laughs that Klyda loved. "Shoot? With *that* thing? It's never been loaded since the day I bought it. But, with patience, perhaps you might learn to click out tunes on it. That's right, drop it. Good night!"



An Embarrassing Visit

HEPSEY BURKE is Mrs. Jonathan Jackson now, but she's the same get-up-and-go Hepsy we all learned to love in the novel Mr. Westcott wrote about her.

By Frank N. Westcott

Author of "Hepsy Burke"

THE small town of Durford was not immune from the curse of drink: there was no doubt about that. Other forms of viciousness there were in plenty; but the nine saloons did more harm than all the rest of the evil influences put together. Young Donald Maxwell, the new rector, though far from being a fanatic, was doing much in a quiet way to neutralize their bad influence. He turned the Sunday-school room into a reading room during the week days, organized a gymnasium, kept watch of the younger men individually, and offered as best he could some chance for the expression of the gregarious instinct which drew them together after the work of the day was over. In the face of his work in these directions, it happened that a venturesome and enterprising saloon-keeper bought a vacant property adjacent to the church, and opened up an aggressive business—much to Maxwell's dismay.

Among the women of the parish there was a "Ladies' Temperance League," of which Mrs. Jonathan Jackson, née

Hepsy Burke, was president. They held quarterly meetings, and it was at one of the meetings held at Thunder Cliff, and at which Mrs. Jackson presided, that she remarked severely:

"Mrs. Sapley, you're out of order. There's a motion before the house, and I've got something to say about it myself. Mrs. Perkins, as Mrs. Maxwell was unable to be present, will you kindly take the chair?—and I'll say what I've got to say."

Mrs. Perkins took Mrs. Jackson's place as the president, and Hepsy began in her most decided tone:

"The fact is, ladies, we're not gettin' down to business as we ought to, if we are to accomplish anything. We've been singing hymns, and recitin' lovely poems, and listenin' to reports as to how money spent for liquor would pay off the national debt; and we've been sayin' prayers, and pledgin' ourselves not to do things none of us ever was tempted to do, or thought of doin', and wearin' ribbons, and attendin' conventions, and talkin' about influencin' legislation at Washington, and eatin' sandwiches, and

drinkin' weak tea, and doin' goodness knows what; but we've not done a blessed thing to stop men drinkin' right here in Durford and breakin' the town law; you know that well enough."

There was a murmur of scandalized dissent at this outspoken expression from the president of the Parish Guild.

"No," Hepsey continued emphatically, "don't you fool yourselves. If we can't help matters right here where we live, then there's no use havin' imitation church sociables, and goin' home thinkin' we've helped the temperance cause, and callin' everybody else bad names who don't exactly agree with us."

"Men have got to go somewheres when their work is over, and have a good time, and I believe that we wont accomplish anything until we fix up a nice, attractive set of rooms with games, and give 'em something to drink."

Cries of "Oh! Oh! Oh!" filled the room.

"I didn't say whisky, did I? Anybody would think I'd offered to treat you, the way you receive my remarks. Now we can't get the rooms right off, 'cause we can't yet afford to pay the rent of 'em. But there's one thing we can do. There's Silas Bingham—the new man. He's gone and opened a saloon within about a hundred feet of the church, and he's sellin' liquor to children and runnin' a slot machine besides. It's all against the law; but if you think the village trustees are goin' to do anythin' to enforce the law, you're just dead wrong, every one of you. The trustees are most of 'em in it for graft, and they aint goin' to close no saloon when it's comin' election day 'fore long, not if Bingham serves cocktails between the hymns in church."

"I must say that I'm painfully surprised at you, Mrs. Jackson," Mrs. Burns began. "You surely can't forget what wonderful things the League has accomplished in Virginia and—"

"Yes," Hepsey interrupted, "but you see Durford aint in Virginia, so far as heard from, and it's our business to get up and hustle right here where we live. Did you think we were tryin' to reform Virginia or Alaska by absent treatment?"

MRS. SAPLEY could not contain herself another moment; so, rising to her feet excitedly, she sputtered:

"I do not agree with you, Mrs. Jackson; I do not agree with you at all. Our meetings have been very inspiring and helpful to us all—"

"I'm very glad you've found them so, Mrs. Sapley. I don't drink myself, and I don't need no encouragin' and upliftin'. It's the weak man that drinks who needs encouragin' and upliftin'; and he wouldn't come near one of our meetin's any more than a bantam rooster would try to hatch turtles from mothballs. We've got to clear Silas Bingham from off the church steps."

"Well," Mrs. Burns inquired, "what do you propose to do about it, if I may be allowed to inquire?"

"Do? The first thing I propose to do is to interview Silas Bingham myself privately, and see what I can do with him. Perhaps I wont accomplish nothin'; but I'm goin' to try, anyway, and make him get out of that location."

"You can, if anybody can," Mrs. Sapley remarked.

"Thank you for the compliment, Mrs. Sapley. Now, Mrs. President, I move, sir—that is, madam—that the parish League appoints me to interview Bingham."

The motion was duly seconded and passed, notwithstanding some mild protests from the opposition, and Hepsey resumed her place as presiding officer of the meeting. Then she continued:

"Excuse me; I forgot the previous question which somebody moved. Shall we have lettuce or chicken sandwiches at our next meetin'? You have heard the question. Those in favor of chicken, please say aye. Ah! The ayes have the chicken, and the chicken is unanimously carried."

ONE bright morning, just as Silas Bingham had finished sweeping out the saloon and was polishing the brass rod on the front of the bar, Mrs. Jackson walked in, and extended her hand to the astonished bar-keeper, whose chin dropped from sheer amazement. She introduced herself in the most cordial and sympathetic of tones, saying:

"How do you do, Mr. Bingham? I haven't had the pleasure of meetin' you before; but I always make it a point to call on strangers when they come to town. I hope your wife is tolerable well."

Bingham gradually pulled himself together and turned very red, as he replied:

"Thanks! But my wife doesn't live here: It's awful kind of you, I'm sure; but you'll find my wife in the third house beyond the bakery, down two blocks—turn to the right. She'll be glad to see you."

"That's good," Hepsey responded, "but you see I don't have much to do on Thursdays, and I'll just have a little visit with you, now I'm here. Fine day, isn't it?"

Mrs. Jackson drew up a chair and sat down, adjusted her feet comfortably to the rung of another chair, and pulled out her knitting from her work-bag, much to the consternation of Silas.

"How nice you've got things fixed up, Mr. Bingham," Hepsey remarked, gazing serenely at the seductive variety of bottles and glasses, and the glare of mirrors behind the bar. "Nothin' like havin' a fine-lookin' place to draw trade. Is business prosperin' nowadays?"

Silas turned three shades redder, and stammered badly as he replied:

"Yes, I'm doin' as well as I can expect—er—I suppose."

"Probably as well as your customers are doin', I should imagine? You don't need to get discouraged. It takes time to work up a trade like yours in a nice decent neighborhood like this."

Silas stared hard at the unwelcome intruder, glancing apprehensively at the door, from which several customers had already turned away when, through the glass, they had caught sight of Hepsey. He was desperately ill at ease.

"If you don't mind my sayin' it, Mrs. Jackson, I think you'd be a lot more comfortable at my house than you are here."

"Oh, I'm perfectly comfortable, thanks, perfectly comfortable. Don't you worry a bit about me."

"But this is a saloon, and it aint just what you might call respectable for ladies to be sittin' in a saloon."

"Why not?"

The question was so sudden, sharp and unexpected that Silas jumped and almost knocked over a bottle of gin.

"I don't see," Hepsey continued, "just why the men should have all the fun, and then when a woman takes to enjoyin' herself say that it isn't respectable. What's the difference, I'd like to know? This is a right cheerful place, and I feel just like stayin' as long as I want to. There's no law against a woman goin' to a saloon is there? I saw Jane Dwire come out of here Saturday night. To be sure, Jane aint just what you'd call a 'society' lady, as you might say, but as long as I behave myself I don't see why I should go."

"But ma'am," Silas protested in wrathful desperation, "I must ask you to go. You'll hurt my trade if you stay here any longer."

"Hurt your trade! Nonsense! You aren't half as polite as I thought you were. I'm awful popular with the gentlemen. You ought to be payin' me a commission to sit here and entertain your customers, instead of insinuatin' that I aint welcome. Ah! Here comes Martin Crowfoot. Haven't seen Martin in the longest time."

MARTIN had ordered before he caught sight of Hepsey. He was just raising the glass to his lips when she stepped up briskly, and extending her hand, exclaimed:

"How do you do, Martin? How are the folks at home?"

Martin stared vacantly at Mrs. Jackson, dropped his glass, and muttered incoherently. Then he bolted hastily from the place without paying for his drink.

Bingham was getting a bit hysterical over the situation, and was about to make another vigorous protest when Hiram Green entered and called for some beer. Again Hepsey extended her hand cordially, and Hiram jumped as if he had seen a ghost—for they had been friendly for years.

"Hepsey Burke—I mean, Mrs. Jackson—what in the name of all that's decent are you doin' in a place like this?" he demanded when he could get his breath. "Don't you know you'll ruin

your reputation if you're seen sittin' in a saloon?"

"Oh, don't let that worry you, Hiram. My reputation'd freeze a stroke of lightnin'. You don't seem to be worryin' much about your own reputation."

"Oh well, a man can do a lot of things a woman can't, without losin' his reputation."

For an instant the color flamed into Hepsey's face as she retorted hotly:

"Yes, there's the whole business. A man can drink, and knock the seventh commandment into a cocked hat; and then when he wants to settle down and get married he demands a wife as white as snow. If he gets drunk, it's a-lark. If she gets drunk, it's a crime. But I didn't come here to preach or hold a revival, and as for my welfare and my reputation, Mr. Bingham and I was just havin' a pleasant afternoon together when you came in and interrupted us. He's awful nice when you get to know him real intimate. Now, Hiram, I hate to spoil your fun, and you do look a bit thirsty. Suppose you have a lemonade on me, if you're sure it wont go to your head. It isn't often that we get out like this together. Lemonades for two, Mr. Bingham; and make Hiram's real sweet."

HEPSEY enjoyed hugely the disgust and the grimaces with which Green swallowed the syrupy mixture. He then beat a hasty retreat down the street. For two hours, with most engaging smiles and cordial handshakes, Hepsey received all who were courageous enough to venture in, until Silas was bordering on madness. Finally he mustered up sufficient courage to threaten.

"Mrs. Jackson, if you don't quit, I'll send for the police," he blustered.

Hepsey gazed calmly at her victim and replied:

"I wouldn't, if I was in your place."

"Well then, I give you fair warning I'll put you out myself if you don't go peaceable in five minutes."

"No, Silas; you're wrong as usual. You can't put me out of here until I'm ready to go. I could wring you out like a mop, and drop you down a knot-hole, and nobody'd be the wiser."

THE door now opened slowly, and a small girl, miserably clad, entered the saloon. Her head was covered with a worn, soiled shawl. From underneath the shawl she produced a battered tin pail and placed it on the bar with the remark, "Pa wants a quart of beer."

Mrs. Jackson looked at the girl and then at Bingham, and then back at the girl inquiringly.

"Are you in the habit of gettin' beer here, child?" asked Hepsey.

"Sure thing!" the girl replied cheerfully.

"How old are you?"

"Ten, goin' on eleven."

"And you sell it to her?" Hepsey asked, turning to Bingham.

"Oh, it's for her father. He sends for it." He frowned at the child, and she quickly disappeared, without the can.

"Does he? But I thought you said that a saloon was no place for a woman; and surely it can't be a decent place for a girl under age. Now, my friend, I've got somethin' to say to you."

"You are the very devil and all," Silas remarked.

"Thanks, Silas. The devil sticks to his job, anyway; and owin' to the likes of you he wins out, nine times out of ten. Now will you clear out of this location, or wont you?"

"Another day like this would send me to the lunatic asylum."

"Then I'll be around in the mornin' at six-thirty, sharp."

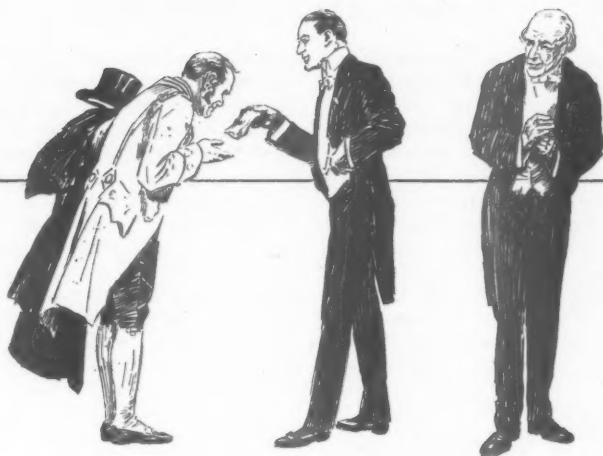
"You just get out of here," he threatened.

"If you promise to clear out yourself within three days."

"I guess I'd clear out of heaven itself to get rid of you."

"Very well: and if you are still here Saturday afternoon, ten of us women will come and sit on your steps until you go. A woman can't vote whether you shall be allowed to entice her men-folk into a place like this, and at the very church-door; but the average woman can be mighty disagreeable when she tries."

Silas Bingham had a good business head: he reckoned up the costs—and cleared out.



At the Legation

JAMES HAY, JR. is a writer whose work you should watch. He has just published "The Man Who Forgot," one of the unusual books of the year. In this short story he entitles himself to a high place among short story writers.

By James Hay, Jr.

Author of "The Man Who Forgot," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

CAPTAIN STONE, organizer of a relief expedition for the revolutionists in Hontueras, thoroughly appreciated the situation the moment he entered the legation. And yet, his self-possession was admirable. Across the spacious hall, near the foot of the wide staircase where the guests, coming from the men's cloak-room on the left and the women's on the right, met their partners and ascended to the ball-room floor, stood Mitchell, of the Secret Service, watchful, alert, his wiry, nervous figure schooled reluctantly to graceful idleness. And near the men's cloak-room was Stillwater, of the Army, looking with tolerant interest at the couples trailing up the stairs.

The Captain realized it all in the flash of a second. He was on the eve of a great undertaking, but not a detail of

his plight escaped him. He had been passed on like a ball from the hands of the men who had shadowed him from his hotel, and Mitchell and Stillwater had taken up the game. He was being watched scientifically, subjected to such incessant scrutiny that he could make no move, speak no word save with the knowledge of his enemies. The realization, coming to him as he paused for the fraction of a minute just inside the door, was a distinct surprise. He had not dreamed that the net had been drawn so tightly. But his self-possession remained undisturbed.

Inside the cloak-room stood a tall, gaunt man, with a long, thin face. His iron-gray hair grew sparsely about his temples, and along the left cheek from the outer end of his eyebrow to within an inch of his mouth there ran a deep

scar. He was Enrique Sagasta, confidential agent of the President of Honduras.

There were three of them, then—Mitchell, Stillwater and Sagasta, all armed with more knowledge than he had suspected—each of them determined to outwit him in the end. One of the thoughts that flashed unbidden through his mind was a picture of the elation he would feel if he could find himself next morning on the deck of a steamer that turned her nose to the south. Nobody, not even the most trained observer, could

face and reaching back, apparently, to the edges of his mutton-chop whiskers.

"Quite well, but never so happy, sir, as when I served you when you were in Washington before, sir. Never so happy as then, sir."

"I remember," said the Captain; "and I have remembered also that this is your birthday. Just a little something, Jenkins."

He slipped his thumb and forefinger into a pocket of his vest and selected one of several bills, which he handed to the man. There are not many people who



She had the next dance with a congressman whose ideas of the step corresponded to his knowledge of the tariff.

have known that a thousand suppositions and hypotheses came to him within the space of a second. His calmness was a work of art, for the risk he ran was great. He did not forget even the little things.

Turning from the chilly greeting of Sagasta, he said cordially to the manservant who had approached deferentially and taken his coat and hat:

"And you are well, Jenkins?"

"Ah, it is kind of you to ask, Captain Stone," answered Jenkins, a beaming smile breaking up the woodenness of his

understand how to tip servants. They do it with an air of secrecy, almost furtively, as if the action would subject them to ridicule and the recipients to sympathy. The Captain was not one of these. He held the bill so that it was visible to anybody who cared to see. He even inclined his figure so that it gave the suggestion of a little bow, expressing the acknowledgment of worth in a fellow man. It might have been even a deprecation of the fact that the present was not larger.

Jenkins regarded him as if he had been a god.

AS the Captain bowed over the hand of his hostess, Señora Daban, wife of the Hontueran minister, his glance went past her and found Agnes Rivola. Seeing her answering smile, he forgot for the moment Sagasta, who had followed him from the cloak-room, and Mitchell, who, at a glance from Stillwater a few yards away, had swung into a trot with a young girl to whom dancing was so engrossing as to permit of no conversation. He forgot because he had set for himself that evening a double task. Not only would he outwit those against whom he fought, but, before the night had passed, he would have her answer to his suit. The idea pleased him. It was like scaling a gigantic cliff to secure at last the one rose that bloomed at its crest.

Señorita Rivola was the most beautiful woman in the Central American set. Moreover, she was reputed the wittiest woman in Washington. Wherefore now, as at all other times, she was surrounded by an imposing number of admirers, but it was evident to any observer—except Captain Stone—that her chief interest was in Captain Stone. He slowly but surely made his way toward her, past frankly admiring débutantes and rather obviously urgent mothers.

There are few really romantic figures in Washington society, and the Captain—with the lifting power of a giant, and a slender gracefulness that escaped being womanish—enjoyed a tremendous popularity. This was ascribed by many to the mystery that surrounded him and to current report that he was a soldier of fortune, a man who engaged in dangerous things as a means of livelihood and as an amusement. But, even without this, he would have been liked for his smile. He always smiled openly, sunnily, with frank, boyish happiness. There were women who said he had the soul of a child—which was a compliment, or not, according to who said it.

Señorita Rivola, unfortunately, had the next dance with a Congressman whose ideas of the step corresponded to his knowledge of the tariff. This she confided to Captain Stone in a skillful aside. And, while he waited for her return, Mr. Mitchell, strolling past in a casual manner, mentioned the bachelors'

cotillion for the following Thursday night.

"I don't know that I shall be able to be there," said the Captain, giving him a level look.

"Going out of town?" Mitchell inquired.

"To be perfectly frank with you," laughed Stone, "I can't tell. Do you know?"

Mitchell was surprised by the question.

"Really, Captain, I don't," he replied, passing on, and called back over his shoulder, "How should I know?"

But the Captain, seeing always those three, Mitchell, Sagasta and Stillwater, about him, knew that he was against desperate chances. There was still a possibility of his succeeding—yet it was a possibility circled by difficulty.

But, however slight might be the thread on which this big thing in his career hung, he had done everything in his power, and there remained the bigger matter, the greater thing, to be settled. That had been his habit always—to stop at nothing, to take every precaution possible, to try to draw the fangs of the future, and after that, to await results. It was because of this high brand of courage that for the next two hours he could confine himself exclusively to making his last, most powerful appeal to Agnes Rivola. She, of all those people, was the only one who knew that in the morning success or failure would come to his venture. To-night he was drawn to her not only by his love but also by his knowledge that she did not sympathize with the men against whom he was working. Her sympathies, at least, were his.

"I heard to-day, for the first time," she said, looking up to him with sparkling eyes, "that you had fought with Fullerish."

"Oh, yes," he agreed, with his ever-ready smile. "And I'm proud of it—more than proud."

"And is Captain Fullerish really such a great man?"

"The greatest I ever knew," he answered, and something about his laughter sounded as if he did laugh merely to hide the depth of his emotion. "He's

done wonderful things, brave things—and always for the 'under dog.' He was with the Japanese against the Russians. I believe, if it had not been for him, Diaz would never have been overthrown in Mexico. And he joined the Greeks against the Turks. I remember once when he—but it's no good singling out one thing he has done. He has gone around the world, a reincarnation of Mars, a perpetual friend of the weak."

"Then you're his pupil, aren't you?" she asked.

She had perfected the woman's art of trying to make him see, without her speaking a word of it, that she had invested him with a mantle of greatness and had run through the cloth of it the fine gold thread of her own admiration.

"I love him, and I would like to be with him in all that he does," he answered, still laughing; "but he's too good for me. Most of the time he's doing things in which I can't help him."

"What an absurd thing to say!" she answered, dismissing the subject.

IT was nearly midnight when she went with him into the conservatory. In half an hour he must leave the legation if he was to catch the train that would carry him to his boat.

They stood quite close to one of the glass walls overlooking the flower-garden in the rear of the house. While she played with her fan and commented on the beauty of the moonlight that lay like glittering steel outside, he saw the figure of a man half-hidden by the shrubbery down by the gate.

"Another!" he thought, and turned to her.

The looks he gave her were always looks of adoration, and once or twice, as he talked, he swayed toward her. But there was in his tone such impassioned earnestness, such ardor, that anyone, overhearing him, might have thought him a trifle theatric. But he was greatly moved, and he spoke as he wished to speak. Besides, he feared more the loss of her love than the overthrow of his expedition.

"It is, of course," he said, leaning toward her, "a question, the plea I have voiced so many times."

"Then, dear Captain, there must be something new, something to—"

"Ah," he interrupted her quickly, adorning the words with his smile, "you know one thought of you makes all the flowers of spring bloom in my heart, and a glance from your eyes brings summer to my soul."

"I wonder," she said, earnestly, reflectively, "whether any man could feel that way about any woman—for more than a few days."

"Forever," he answered her.

She thought she could feel the glow of his eyes.

"Then,"—she could not resist the temptation to coquet with him,—“why this urgency, this haste for my answer—now?”

If he had not hung, all eagerness, upon her words, he would have heard the little noise behind the great palm near which he stood.

"You know, know well enough," he took her seriously. "To-night decides so much—the—a little affair some distance away." He took possession of the hand that was unemployed with the fan. "In a few weeks, two months at most, I believe, we shall have in our hands success—the full-blown rose of success. And, if you will not wear the flower, will not claim it as your own, just as I am your own, it will lose all its fragrance."

He drew her closer to him, so that her bare shoulder was against his coat-sleeve. Her eyes were wide with admiration as she looked up to him.

"And there is danger?" she asked softly.

"A little—perhaps," he said carelessly; "but not much when once I have started. Let me confide in you." He put his arm about her. "See how I trust you above all—all men and all women, everybody. There is so much opposition to my going that I am not at all sure I shall be able to leave this house to-night."

"This house—to-night!" she exclaimed in a half-whisper.

"But," he said, his arm tightening about her, "I shall try to leave the moment you have told me that I may—that you will be waiting for me when I come back. I want to know that, when I have done the things it is my duty to do, I



Edmund Gosse

He knew that they watched him continually, and once or twice Mitchell, for no particular reason and without good excuse, stood too near him as he talked to her.

shall find you again. I want to come through all the work swiftly, eagerly, as a thirsty man struggles through the desert to fountains of delectable waters. Tell me that I may do this, and in a moment I shall open this door and go quietly through the garden to the street. In another half-hour I shall be gone from the city."

"Through the garden!" she said again; and then, with commanding earnestness. "Where are you going?"

"Would it be well for me to tell you? Would you not prefer for me to vanish and reappear? How could I—"

He paused and stood away from her. He had heard the step behind him, and Sagasta bowed low before them.

"I beg your pardon," he said in his muddy Spanish accent, "but Señor Daban requests you, Captain Stone, to grant him just a minute of your time."

"Why?"

Stone asked this resentfully.

"The Minister says it is of great importance," the gaunt man returned, and bowed again, inclining his spare form toward the exit into the ballroom. "And you, Señorita," he added, "—Señor Daban requests that you become one of the small party."

"The lady!" the Captain exclaimed harshly. "Surely—"

"Why not, Captain?" Sagasta's bass voice sounded, somehow, smooth as silk.

Señorita Rivola looked bewildered. The exclamation of the Captain had surprised her.

"Surely," she said sweetly, "our host must be obeyed. He will not detain us long?"

"He particularly desired me to say it was for only a moment," Sagasta answered her.

Captain Stone looked once more out to the garden. The figure of the man down by the gate stirred slightly. The Captain turned and followed his companions into the ballroom.

They had gone only half the distance of the ballroom along the edge of the whirling couples when Sagasta stepped in front of the Señorita and opened a door leading into a small room. The thing was done so quickly, he had bowed her in so deftly and Stone had followed

his motion so promptly, that nobody among the dancers had noticed the incident. Sagasta closed the door, locked it and dropped the key into his pocket.

Señor Daban, gross, thick of neck, absurdly short in stature, stood with his back to the open fire. He did not bow as they entered. To his right, Mitchell leaned an elbow on the end of the mantel and smiled slightly. Stillwater, who had been standing at a window pretending to look through the thick curtains at the outside world, turned slowly and did not smile.

The calmness of the Captain still was unbroken. He felt, rather than saw, that Sagasta's smile translated the attitude of the group in the room. They were openly hostile, incredibly sure of themselves. He was aware that the girl had sunk, speechless, wide-eyed, into a chair near the door, and that she sat on the extreme edge of it, rigidly apprehensive. He looked at his watch.

"Unfortunately," he said pleasantly, bowing to Daban, "I am in something of a hurry."

The Minister smiled, exhibiting neither mirth nor cordiality.

The Captain bowed again, looking toward the others.

"May I ask what is wanted?" he inquired, slipping the watch back into his pocket.

Sagasta slowly crossed the room and took his stand on the minister's left, putting his hands behind him and playing idly with the tails of his coat. In this way, he was bent over, his long face thrust forward.

Stillwater was looking at the girl. Afterwards, she remembered that there had been something like compassion in his eyes.

"Why hurry?" asked Sagasta at last, insolently.

The Captain took a step forward, but he was still smiling.

"Señor Daban," he said, "I came into this room at your request, as I understood it. As soon as I had entered, the door was locked. Will you be kind enough to tell me why?"

Señor Daban rubbed his hands together slowly.

"You may," he said, his falsetto voice



"I wonder," she said earnestly, "whether any man could feel that way about any woman—for more than a few days."

in queer contrast to his fat, bull-like neck. "Also, I shall answer you. We feel it our duty to detain you for a while—perhaps for quite a while."

Captain Stone had ceased to smile.

"So!" he said sharply. "I think I understand. But the lady—Señorita Rivola? Surely the business does not concern her."

"We are the judges of that, if I may be so bold as to suggest it," Sagasta made reply.

The Captain looked at his watch again. In twenty-five minutes the train that could take him to his boat, in time for his expedition, would leave the station.

He glanced at the girl. She was frightened. He took another step forward and struck sharply with his clenched hand on the little table that held the reading light.

"Señor Daban," he said crisply, "I demand that that door be unlocked and that this lady be allowed to leave the room. I shall go with her."

The Minister stopped rubbing his hands and waved them from him in mock apology.

"Captain Stone forgets the little matter of the expedition to Hontueras," he said, with a throaty laugh.

"And what have I to do with that?"

The glow from the lamp came up to the Captain's rugged face and marked it with deep shadows.

"Let us see," the Minister suggested, his words slow: "Hontueras is a rich country, as rich as any in Central America, and President Zorilla is troubled—no; I do not mean troubled. Rather, I should say is annoyed—unjustly—by the threat of revolution.

"Possibly I would have been nearer right if I had said that there actually exists revolution in Hontueras—rebellion which might, under certain circumstances, succeed. We can countenance neither rebellion nor the assistance of rebellion."

"And what is that to me?"

Stone asked that, and swept every member of the company with his long, level gaze.

Sagasta, holding out a deprecating hand, checked the Minister's reply.

"Let me show Captain Stone," he said, with an ugly grin. "Let me show what it is to him."

He bowed to Señorita Rivola.

"It is regrettable," he continued, "to bring a lady into such an affair. But— but she knows."

The girl did not speak. It was as if her eyes took no knowledge of his inquiring attitude.

"Señorita," urged Daban, "did he not tell you of this expedition?"

Captain Stone did not look at her. Her hands were clasped tight on the arms of her chair, and her breathing was tumultuous. But she gave the information.

"Yes," she said, hardly above a whisper, her eyes cast down.

The Minister's shrill voice, like the hiss of a whip through the air, broke the silence that followed.

"Surely, the Captain knows the laws of the United States against filibustering—filibustering under such conditions," he observed, as if he commented on the weather. "It means imprisonment. Neither he nor his expedition can be permitted to plunder Hontueras or to murder Zorilla—isn't that true?"

"So this is what all this means!" Stone swept them with contemptuous eyes. "Now, let me tell you: I know you all. Señor Sagasta is the man who has acted as Zorilla's agent in selling the lands and the people—yes, the people—of Hontueras to the foreigners who would put the money, the blood money, into Zorilla's hands in return. Zorilla! The man who makes his puny pretence of ruling his country, but who pillages and plunders it and enslaves his people for the money required to support his scan-

dalous life! Named a ruler and living a lie, selling his people into bondage, burying them deeper and deeper in ignorance and poverty and hunger! Mighty heaven! That the nations of the world, speaking of national comity and international justice, should permit the outrage! I wish, with all my heart I wish, that I could drag him from his palace, cast him out of the land that is not his, overwhelm him with the obloquy which he deserves but which would mean no shame in his eyes! That much for your Zorilla—and Zorilla's creatures!"

He paused, fancying he heard a cry from the girl who sat behind him, rigid, frightened, alone with the men.

"And you, Lieutenant Stillwater, are here, I suppose, because you are familiar with Latin American affairs and Latin American geography. It is the fault of the government which detailed you to the work—not your own. And the same thing applies to you, Mr. Mitchell, you of the Secret Service. I blame neither of you for your presence in this affair to-night. But, by the living God! what fools you are that you have studied these things and gone under the surface of the sham and yet are blind to the misery, the suffering, the degradation of a people who are farmed out to the nations of the world!"

"And how comes it that Captain Stone has such a love for the people who are so degraded?" Sagasta's coarse bass voice put the question.

"It is not alone for your people, Señor Sagasta," Stone replied, his voice like the thrust of a rapier; "and I learned the love from a man greater than you by the heights of heaven. I learned it from Andrew Fullerish."

"I tell you I wish I could drag the coward Zorilla from his house—him from his house and you from your little places of prominence here!"

He paused and looked at them again, seeing them smile in ridicule.

"But why should we discuss it?" he asked, glancing at his watch. In fifteen minutes his train would leave. In the twinkling of an eye he visualized the boat creeping out through the gloomy, misty dawn to the open sea—the boat that traveled like an angel of mercy, for

she was laden with guns and ammunition, food and clothing. If he could not leave the room within five minutes, he would be too late. He turned to the door and shook the knob.

"I have no more time for discussion," he said imperiously. "I warn you to let me go."

Señorita Rivola looked up to him appealingly.

"Captain, it's no go." Mitchell spoke for the first time.

"I beg your pardon." Stone stepped back to the table. "Why is it no go?"

"In the first place," the wiry little man explained, "you expect to board a boat in Baltimore or Norfolk—we don't know which—early in the morning, a boat bound for Hontueras, laden with arms and supplies for the revolutionists."



If he could not leave the room in five minutes he would be too late. He turned to the door and shook the knob.

"Prove it!" thundered Stone, and struck the table again.

"Captain Stone," Sagasta's voice cut in again, "was reckless, no doubt, in talking somewhat freely of the details of his expedition to a lady."

Captain Stone drew in his breath swiftly, so that it made an almost inaudible sound. Once before he had done that. It was in front of Port Arthur when he had been fighting with Fullerton on his right and his own brother on his left. A fragment of shell had carried his brother from his side and plowed up the earth from under his feet so that he fell. He had made that sound as he went down in the dust.

But he paused now for only a part of a second. He had not taken his eyes from Mitchell's.

"Prove it!" he thundered. "Prove it, or let me leave this room."

Mitchell spoke again. It seemed that he, having "worked up the case," became naturally the spokesman, the accuser.

"It won't do, Captain," he declared. "We've got the proof. In fact, you have it—have it with you."

The Captain glanced at his watch. He could not make the train.

"That," he said, his smile coming back, "is, of course, quite a lie. You have not the proofs. I have not the proofs. You arrest me at your peril, and you know it."

He leaned with his back against the door, and laughed. His manner was tinged all at once with nonchalance. He gave the impression that he cared not a rap about anything that might happen.

"Some day," he continued, with laughter on his lips and none in his eyes, "I shall even up scores with all of you—men."

"This afternoon," Mitchell went on, ignoring the remark, "you received a dispatch from Hontueras, a dispatch in cipher. You spent two hours in your room in the hotel translating it. It contained all the directions about where your expedition was to land, where it would meet the revolutionists. That—"

"Fortunately," — Stone flicked him with his voice,—"I tore up the dispatch and the key to it—tore them into such

small pieces that not even the most accomplished spies could make anything of them."

"Don't waste words, Mr. Mitchell," the Minister advised, and sat down, ponderously, in a chair by the table, his back to the girl and Stone.

"I won't," agreed the Secret Service man. "Now, that information is useful to the government of Hontueras. Zorilla can use it to ascertain where the rebel strength will be concentrated at the given time. That's what he wants to know."

"Obviously," said the Captain gaily.

"Give us the translation of it, then."

"I can't. I haven't got it."

Stillwater came forward.

"Don't make unnecessary trouble for yourself, Captain Stone," he advised.

"There are three ports, to any one of which that boat may be bound—Saceiba, Salemas or Voropez. Undoubtedly, your instructions from the rebel forces tell you which one. Besides, they will show from what port you expect to sail in going from this country."

"Perhaps," the Captain agreed, without apparent interest.

"We must have a copy of those instructions, the copy you brought from your hotel with you."

"And if I say I haven't the copy?"

"Then, Captain Stone, we must search you."

On that, there fell a pause. Outside, in the ballroom, there was the sound of the band, the *thud-thud* of the drum in the fast music, and the *swish-swish* of the women's gowns across the polished floor.

The girl, no longer rigid on the edge of the chair, was huddled up, weeping silently.

"By what right will you search me? By what right?"

The Captain's voice was peculiar. Stillwater once had heard something like it from a defiant recruit whom a group of soldiers had threatened to whip.

"By the only right," said Mitchell tensely, "the right of arrest. You are under arrest, Captain Stone, as a filibusterer."

"And you intend—intend to search me?"

"I do."

The Captain turned toward the girl. Quite involuntarily, it seemed, she got to her feet and stood looking at him with eyes full of misery.

"Señorita Rivola," he said, his gay laugh a trifle off key, "it may be, perhaps, that you will grant me a few minutes?"

She bowed silently.

He ignored Sagasta and looked only at Mitchell, saying:

"If I am under arrest, it is useless for me to resist. You, gentlemen, will grant me, I know, this brief interview with the Señorita."

Sagasta looked at Mitchell and shook his head.

"Oh, there's no cause for uneasiness,"—Stone flicked them again. "The matter is finished. I have no desire to escape. Besides, your man must be still in the garden, and there are several in the street."

Mitchell went to the door, and Sagasta, following him, unlocked it. Stillwater and the Minister, rolling ponderously out of his chair, went also.

When they were gone, the girl stood, her head still bowed, and waited for Stone to speak. He leaned his back against the mantel, and there was a sag in his shoulders. His eyes held some new meaning of dreariness. It was as if the curtain had been rung down on the play he made for her—a little comedy to cover up what he had felt because of the indignities to which they had subjected him.

"Of course," he said dully, "this arrest is a farce. It will amount to nothing. They have no evidence."

She came over to him slowly, very slowly, and put her hand on his shoulder.

"I am sorry," she said falteringly. "I never knew how much it meant to you. I realize now how selfish I was in persuading you to let Father take the expedition. I hardly feel proud of having played my part successfully."

"Captain Fullerish," he said, the ghost of his smile returning, "is a better man than I. He cannot fail. He'll be sailing by daylight."

"If you were not so disappointed about being unable to go," she half-chided him, "I'd feel obliged to quarrel with you because you and Father made me pretend to betray you to Sagasta."

"It was your part in the scheme to allow your father to get off," he reminded her. "If we had tried any other way, we could not have succeeded. They were too sharp."

The sag was still in his shoulders, and again he could smell the salt water turned up by the prow of a boat.

She had both hands on his shoulders now and was looking up to him with great, wide eyes.

"When we were in the conservatory, playing at love-making for Señor Sagasta's benefit," she said at last, her voice inviting him, "how did you think of the—the lovely things you said?"

He caught her hands.

"They've been crowding to my lips ever since I've known you," he told her, his voice trembling.

"Ah!" she said softly, looking at him with misty eyes, "I would like you never to be disappointed—but always happy. I would like to bring the summer always to your soul—forever."

It was long minutes before she could speak again.

"How did you get the instructions to Father?" she asked at last.

"That's the only thing I'm proud of," he laughed, his smile wearing a new radiance. "Sagasta saw me do it. I pretended to be giving him a birthday present—and his gratitude was immense."

Somebody knocked on the door, and the men filed back into the room. Señor Daban had an apology to make.

"I wanted your coat and hat brought here, Captain Stone, so that you might leave—unobtrusively—with Mr. Mitchell," he said regretfully, "but there is difficulty in finding them. It seems that my servant Jenkins disappeared in a most remarkable manner several hours ago. He left the coats and hats in confusion."

"Do not, I beg of you," said Captain Stone politely, "allow yourself to be bothered by such a trifle—at this time."



Sonia Comes Back

A Woman

ONE of those stories the like of which you never see in any other magazine—strong, true and new in every line; and illustrated with a style and interpretation which establishes a milestone in illustration.

By Berthe Knatvold Mellett

Author of "A White Woman," "Bob o' the Snows," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY M LEONE BRACKER

THE organ throbbed and died to an expectant hush. Censers breathed their gray ascending prayers, and beyond the walls the city murmured like a penitent. Slowly, as one who calls his soul back from a vision, the Sunday evening preacher lifted his head and with a strong, pale hand, thrust back the leonine mane on his forehead.

He rose and stepped forward, the black of his cassock detaching itself from the sumptuous shadows of the chancel, and stood for a moment in the glow of the altar lamps, his somnolent eyes on the strange assemblage that filled the Church of the Purification. Then, instead of mounting the pulpit, he moved down the three steps exalting the clergy, depending on his superb length of limb for the necessary elevation.

"My text for the evening," he announced in a purring voice that vibrated softly to alcove and gallery, "is from Charles Rann Kennedy:

"Some one 'as to see to the drains, some one 'as to clear up the muck of the world.'"

For a moment the very smoke from the censers seemed to stiffen in the air. Then came the stir of the radicals in the audience, and the quick breath of the conservatives—the tense focusing of the faculties of student and teacher, poet and ditch-digger, Theosophist and Trinitarian. Called by the news of a

new evangel, urged by the social and spiritual hungers of the times, the heterogeneous company settled itself to its heretics' feast with appetites ranging from avid apostasy to sickened orthodoxy.

Behind the exaltation on the face of the Reverend Ichabod Amadon, gluttoned egotism smirked. He had done it. He had flung his genius into the lump of a Sunday evening service, and the soggy occasion was aerated beyond dreams of leaven. In the moment when he stood before the altar lamps, he had taken the measure of the congregation; and the message he gave was pregnant with its problems. He pleaded for the elevation of man back to his plane above the cattle, for the liberation of women, the consecration of love—the glory of God through justice and joy.

Through it all, threading his social bombs on a cord of velvet, his feline voice purred of the passing of the old theology, and the dawn of the Mystical Church of the Consanguinity, intensifying to a kind of frenzy the physiological effect of the incense in the air.

HALFWAY down the nave a girl sat with wide eyes strained toward the preacher. She had taken her hat from her head through a sort of fantastic courtesy, and the aureole of her brown braids above her pallor gave to her face something of the haloed purity of a



THE
HALOED
PURITY
OF THE
BOY
JESUS"

Boy Jesus in a picture. A bearded Russian sat beside her, nodding his head from time to time, and in the extremes of his approbation patting the girl's hand that lay upon his arm.

"We have come a long way from the old faith when we listen to such a message, Sonia," the old man whispered in her ear. She did not hear him. In her veins the smoldering fires of generations of social martyrs were leaping into flame. She sat rigid and intent until the speaker had finished. Then silent still, she rose, and holding her father by the hand, hurried through the crowd toward the door.

At the entrance, she looked back. Against the altar lights, the preacher stood silhouetted like a prophet in the flames. A dozen black figures surrounded him, gesticulating upward toward his face, their protesting voices sounding above the shuffle of the emptying church.

Sonia Norofsky twitched the fingers in her father's hand. "I will speak to him," she whispered, and slipped quietly away.

Arod Norofsky stepped aside from the out-flowing human stream and waited. When the aisle had cleared, he saw his daughter. She stood waiting for the menacing circle around the preacher to dissolve. Church wardens they seemed to be—walls of the fold laying down the law to the shepherd. Arod Norofsky smiled. So it went in every temple, it would seem—discord, domination, bigotry, where peace and tolerance and progress should abide. Perhaps it was best, after all, to have suffered the pain of parturition and be troubled only by a haunting homesickness for the faith of one's fathers. Something of the same thought seemed to come to the robed man before the chancel, for his eyes wandered over the irate heads around him, and rested on Sonia.

She stood alert and delicately strong, the rapt beauty of her face glorifying the soft earthliness of her body—like an Eve but once removed from the primal clay.

"So stood Rebekah and Rachel in Israel," Arod Norofsky mused.

AS the ring around him began to disperse, Amadon stepped forward to the girl. She held out her hand as he came. "I am Sonia Norofsky," she said simply. He nodded, smiling gravely, as though the rest were understood.

"You are in trouble?" She looked past him at the group of wardens.

"I am acquainted with grief," he answered. "And I invited this. During the summer I gave them the Minor Prophets—and the storm began to gather. The *Drain Man* has merely loosed the lightnings. It was no good to tell them I couldn't leave society with Malachi, like a cat switching the air with a tail two thousand years old; that I had to bring my proposition down to date. They didn't like Hosea and Joel, and they won't stand the *Drain Man*. So after the annual meeting next Friday—out I go."

She knew what it meant to be out of a job, and thrust out her hand boyishly. He took it and held it a moment, laughing richly with his head thrown back. Suddenly, with the facility of an actor, his expression changed. The resonance of his laugh was caught and lost in the hypnotic high-tension purr of his voice. He leaned toward Sonia, peering through the shadows as the verger cut off circuit after circuit of lights, and his somnolent eyes under their heavy lids glowed with what seemed an inward ecstasy.

"The job may be lost," he purred above her, "but the world goes on. And the world is the church of the social priest."

Something within her recoiled ever so slightly. Moses was a social priest, Tolstoi, and that same Carpenter she had heard preached. But what was the stamp of divine ordination on this man who ranked himself with them? Her lips tightened, and the hungry vanity of the man saw and told him he had erred. He changed. The fine gaiety came back to his eyes, and he pursed his full lips humorously.

"And so, after next Friday, the Reverend Ichabod Amadon, late assistant rector of the Church of the Purification, becomes a peripatetic beggar for the souls of men," he said.

SHE looked up quickly, her attention caught and held. There had been little said of souls that night. "Souls?" she questioned.

"Souls — ultimately. Bodies first, of course. Souls must be saved through the medium of the flesh. Men can't see the stars with their eyes full of mud. I'm going down to clear up some of the muck."

"And this?" She shot a comprehensive little gesture out over the empty church. The verger was already turning down the lights. The aisles lay straight and pew-bordered like sacred paths, and at the portal the waiting father stood, a patient guardian patriarch. The eyes of the agitator followed her gesture, dilating and contracting with his thoughts. It had been a wonderful stage-setting. And in perspective, on through life, what a back-ground it would be.

"This," he exclaimed, "has cast me out. I came preaching, and 'this' wants massage. They complained of their empty church. Well, I have filled their church. The outcast, the hopeless, the godless, the socially maimed and halt, have heard my voice. And now 'this' complains. Pharisees! They want the pretty, the painted and perfumed, the manicured and millinered, and they want me to preach the drivel that will catch them. So they think I will curb my tongue to the comprehension of the senseless?—leash my genius?—bind my strength? When I can drink the strong wine of adulation, and trace the heavens for the multitude, am I going to drone platitudes so asthmatic millionaires can snore undisturbed in their pews? I preach for hire—yes! But my wage is the breath of inspiration and emulation—the glow of fires rekindled in chilling hearts. Let some cookie-coun-tenanced curate dish up their cant. I am not here to pour sugar sauce over their pudding of a world. I'm going. There is a soap-box and a world waiting for me outside."

He stopped and peered through the half light at the face of the girl, anxious lest in the intoxication of his own eloquence he had over-ridden her delicacy again. But the tight line of her lips was

relaxed, and her breath came like sighs in a dream. The hypnotism of his personality had claimed her. His boasting was strength, his presumption consecration. Across her dark eyes swept skimming clouds of emotion, and she did not see the gratification that sunned itself behind the exaltation that glowed on his face.

IN the year that followed, Sonia Norofsky lived the emotional phases of a lifetime. Into the serene orbit of her home-life, a comet of flame had plunged. She had been caught up and carried along in the vortex of a personality, and system after system of new faiths had flashed upon her speeding mind. Through it all her father had looked on and held her hand, and with his gentle nihilism had contrived to erase some of the lurid reaches of her vision, softening her new-found hates and tempering her premature ardors. With tact and patience, he had harnessed her untamed zeal when she would have preached her new doctrine in the Amsterdam Avenue Free Kindergarten where she was employed as a teacher.

"Sonia," he said, "much can be lost by a hot head. The city of New York thinks you fit to teach babies to weave colored paper, and to build houses of sand. But are you fit to weave wise revolution, and to build safe Utopias? Better keep your zeal in your heart until it ripens, and if you would ripen it in wisdom, come back to the sunshine of the world. It is long since we laughed together at Maia Slovanki, who 'don't likes to go on the school,' and Seraphina, who lunches on bananas and herring. How is it you have not told me of them lately? Has the fierceness of the new fire burned up the old sunshine? There was one once who beheld a great light. And when the glamour fell from his eyes and he saw clearly, he said to be temperate in all things.

"And Sonia, my daughter, beware the lust of the flesh."

A dark stain spread under the ivory of her face. "I wish," she said, after a long silence, "it could be again as though you had not said that. I thought you understood. We have lived together, and

read together and talked together, and there has always been understanding until now. But since there is none now, I must explain. I am the neophyte—the disciple—striving to fit myself to touch the hem of my master's garment. He is my teacher—my priest—"

Her thin hands locked themselves across her breast, and with her head thrown back and her lids dropped over her eyes, she seemed to float on the ether of her passion like some sexless angel over a cathedral door.

The clock on the shelf ticked off a full minute before Anton Norofsky broke his wise silence.

"So be it, Sonia," he said at last. "It is as though it had never been said."

He turned away toward the window of their apartment, and stood looking down upon the teeming life of Amsterdam Avenue.

"Come, Sonia," he called, "and see the glory of Michael Denny. He has got him a dog."

A little sob of laughter choked in Sonia's throat.

"To-day he brought the dog to the kindergarten," she said, "and told me, 'His name is Bessie. He is a she.'"

Her father laid his hand across her shoulder. She dropped her head upon the window-ledge and wept.

IN the dark of an early evening, Sonia Norofsky climbed the four flights to the Amsterdam Avenue apartment, and felt for the lock. When the door opened her breath came sharp with relief. The apartment was dark. Her father was not home. She was spared his unspoken sympathy, his gentle cleverness in covering her daily battle with despair.

Weakly, as one to whom respite has been granted in torture, she leaned against the opened door. Holding the knob for support, she stooped and ran an icy hand along the dark floor of the hall. Yes, there was an envelope. She clutched it to her and knelt, blind with the onrush of her blood, shaken with the pounding of her heart. But she had found other letters before, others that mocked her torment, others with other post-marks, other writings. She wondered if she would recognize his writing

—it had been so long. She wondered what the post-mark would be.

Trembling, she groped her way to the inner room and felt for a match. All at once she thought of a childish subterfuge. She slipped the envelope under a book on the table. It was the gas-bill of course, but she would have a minute before she knew.

She drew her father's chair to the table and dropped into it, her head in her hands. She must get herself together before her father came. He must not know how scorched she was by the fire through which she walked. She must think—think—and adjust the sick machinery of her mind. She must remember as she had tried so vainly to remember, that it was a new social faith, and not a new personal god, to which she had been converted.

She must recall that between her and her priest there was no need of paper and posts for communication. Where was the Orientalism he had taught her? Was she numb to the mystic flux of thought from soul to soul? What had become of the invisible nexus between the communicants of the Church of the Consanguinity, that her faith should cool and her heart grow sick for a scrap of his writing?

Why did her very body ache for a word from him? Why did she search the news-stands for radical journals and read them furtively, searching for the magic juxtaposition of the letters of his name?

FOR the thousandth time she recalled his confidences. He had told her of his tragedy, of the wife and children whose unfitness had relegated them to the shadows of his world. It was soul hunger that had turned him toward her, his spiritual friend. Was she unworthy, that she should whimper for palpable tokens?

Unwittingly her hand went out toward the envelope under the book. She struck a match and lighted the gas. Then, shutting her eyes as one shuts one's eyes against a blow, she raised the letter to the level of her face.

Then she looked—and saw it was from him.



"THE BEWARE THE LUST OF -



Sonia, Beloved Child:

I have been sick, stricken in soul and body. I lie near to death—and penniless. I have been stabbed to the heart with the knife of ingratitude. I cannot tell you in a letter. It is enough to say that those I went out to save—ah well, why should I torture myself anew with my sorrows? Jerusalem, you remember, stoned the prophets. And it is the same old world.

Slowly I am regaining a little physical strength, but unless some relief comes from my present situation, I shall die of despair. You know a little of my family life. You know the loneliness in which I walked until you came. Mismatching is the supreme tragedy of fate. Had I been a less conspicuous man, I should have sought healing in divorce. But a man in my work owes it to society not to hamper his usefulness by running into criticism. So I have sacrificed my personal happiness for the good of mankind, and have gone on bearing the unbearable.

But now I find myself bound by sickness and penury to a home that racks my every sensibility—that transforms me to a maddened animal. Unless I return to New York at once and plan a lecture tour for the winter, I shall die like a rat in a hole. And Sonia, my friend, I have not the fare to New York.

If I could see you, if you could come to me in a dream, the fragrance of your presence would clarify this muddle around me. Ah, your wonderful face! Your healing hands!

As I lie here—I am writing in bed and will send the letter out by a child when the postman passes—I revive. Something assures me you will find a way to help me. Come to me in my dreams and lay your cool hands upon my brow.

I. A.

WHEN her father's key turned in the lock, Sonia brought the dishes of their simple meal to the table.

"Father," she said, when he had pushed his plate aside and lighted his long pipe, "it is good to-morrow is Saturday and Monday is a holiday, because I must leave the kindergarten for a few days. I am going on a journey."

He looked across the table at her, and the kindly lines deepened on his face.

"You go to him?" he asked.

"He is sick," she answered.

Anton Norofsky was silent for a time. Then he spoke.

"Sonia, my daughter," he said, "I

recall to you something that was to be between us as though it had never been said."

The breath caught in her throat, and she nodded her head.

"Now it is said," he continued. "Always you have put the simple lessons of life—the lessons that Michael Denny learns in the street—away from you. Now you must reckon with them, for they are in the experience of all. Had I not left the old land and the old faith, you would have been instructed, for some ancient wisdom laid the simple things of life in the foundations of the old world. But we have chosen to do without the church, and Death chose we should do without your mother. In this new world I have lived a continuation of the old student days at Moscow, lost in my books and my thoughts, and have left you to feed yourself on eagerness and dreams. So now I must go back and teach you the lessons that we have left unheeded. Sonia, my daughter, 'Beware the lust of the flesh.'

"You are going to him, and I give you my blessing before you go, for you will need it before you return. I know the race you come from, and I have no fear for you. But I have pity, and I have love. If I could take on my heart the wounds that wait for you, I would rejoice that you were spared. But you must suffer your own miseries. My life has taught me one great lesson—that each must live his own life. Knowing that, I resign you to yourself. You are a girl, and the white ignorance of girlhood is on you. Of the man I know many things—"

Her eyes flamed out at him, and he leaned across the table and touched her hand.

"You will keep silence, Sonia," he said. "I am saying no more than must be said. Of this man I know the things that one man perceives of another—not the cheap gossip of the street. I have a big duty, and a bigger love toward you, my daughter. But greater than both is the sadness in my heart that you must learn your lesson. If I could tell you these things I know, and if you heeded me, great trouble could be avoided. But youth heeds nothing but its own experi-

ence. So I will keep my peace. And now, my daughter, you will lift your head and smile into my eyes again. I would see the last of my little girl—for you will come back to me a woman."

He rose from the table, and she came to him. He took her face in his hands and turned it upwards toward him. So he stood for a long moment reading the sweet depths of her eyes, as one might read the stars in a well. Then a dry sob shook his shoulders, and he stooped and kissed her on the forehead.

WHEN Sonia reached the little Ohio village to which Amadon had moved his family after leaving the church, her eagerness seemed suddenly to pale and shape itself to the form of some vague trouble. A furtive sense of wrong-doing came over her, and her fine purpose showed itself in the guise of something base and sly. It was as though her very proximity to the thing she had come to do removed her from it, and set her above herself, a cold and critical non-participant.

She saw herself, not as a healer hastening to a call, but as a foolish, futile child bent on an equivocal errand. Something intangibly gross mocked at her. Perhaps it was the dingy gray of the morning, the unlovely ruins of hedges and fences that lined the street—the dismal whip of the washings left to fade and fray on the lines along the way. Perhaps it was a sense of understanding between herself and the pimpled clerk at the livery stable who volunteered to drive her to her destination himself. It was as though the two of them, she in her zealous innocence and he with his leer, had entered upon an intrigue together.

In vain she recalled her mission, and spurred her impatience to lift the despondency of her friend. In vain she rehearsed the arguments she would bring to her aid when she should urge upon him the means of his return to New York. He would protest. He would be hurt, shamed—angered even. He would refuse to reap the profits of her industry and thrift. She would be forced to beg, contrive, defy. Some sort of trickery might even be necessary.

The hours of the night on the train had sped in a hundred different plans for persuading him to become her debtor. But plans failed now to dispel her mood. Something grim and low and sickening droned an undertone of suggestion to her thoughts.

As the buggy drew up at the gate of a farmhouse on the outskirts of the village, a half-clad youngster pressed his nose against a smeary pane. Another came and crowded him aside, and another and another. Her own race had bred sparsely and well, and she shut her eyes against the sight. She had known he had children, and she had known he was poor. And yet the very squalor and fecundity of the village in which he lived nauseated her.

SHE turned a button on the door, and the *whirr* of a disabled bell announced her. An unwashed baby in rompers opened the door. A smell of coffee and fried food assailed her nostrils. A woman with an infant on her hip appeared at the end of the hall. With a kind of blank accuracy, Sonia calculated dates, even as she went through the formalities of her coming. The child might be three months old—not more. And it was two years since that night in the Church of the Purification.

The woman showed no surprise when Sonia asked for Mr. Amadon. Rather, she sighed resignedly, as though a routine had begun. There was a kind of ghostly beauty in her face, and the worn remnant of a fine strength enwrapped her figure, blurred to indistinctness by much motherhood.

"Mr. Amadon is at breakfast," she said. "Will you come in?" Her voice was faintly rich, like the voice of a worn-out instrument.

Suddenly the necessity to lie, to save the tired woman who swung the door open for her entrance, swept over Sonia.

"I come from—the church," she faltered, and stopped, choked by the unpalatable words.

Amadon looked up from his breakfast as she entered. In the second of their meeting, sinister lines wove themselves and unraveled into a smile about his mouth.

"Sonia!" he said.

"You are better?" she inquired. He pushed his plate disgustedly aside and dropped his chin in his hand.

Mrs. Amadon delivered the baby to the biggest sister and returned to the table.

"You come from the church?" she asked eagerly.

The lie stuck in Sonia's throat.

"Is the church going to take him back—is it?" the woman questioned. "Oh, if it would! I thought maybe he would stay there—maybe when he'd reached the top he would be satisfied. But it was like every other time: there was something else he wanted—people would make more of him some place else—"

Amadon raised his hand. "Mary," he began in a voice of deadly suavity, "you are initiating a stranger into our difficulties. This young lady comes, doubtless, with a message from the comrades—a secret message probably. Would you be so kind as to leave us alone."

THE woman rose and left the room; looking from the window, Sonia saw her trudging across the yard for the youngster in rompers who had opened the door in answer to her ring. There was silence between the pair at the table. Finally Amadon leaned toward Sonia.

"Now you see what my home is—dirty, discordant, child-ridden," he murmured, and his voice dripped with tears of self pity. "Now you see with what stripes I am chastened."

Sonia winced with a pain he mistook for sympathy, and he dropped his head in his hand again and sighed deeply. She turned her head.

"Why didn't you stay in the church?" she questioned as calmly as she could, her eyes following the woman in the yard. "Why didn't you leave the Minor Prophets and the *Drain Man* alone? Why didn't you sacrifice something to them—"

"Sonia, you too!" he moaned and turned his face away. Through the cloudy sickness of her soul there penetrated a ray of comedy; and she smiled. But the cloud closed in again, and the

smile died on her lips in quivering pain. Back in her consciousness was a plan; could she but recall it, which, carried out, would blot up this ugly suggestion of buffoonery. What was it? What had she come steeled to do? Something she remembered, which would call into action his splendid opposition, his great courage and independence. Her hands, locking and unlocking in her shabby muff, encountered a wadded roll of bills pinned in the pocket. Her cheeks flamed with a shame that was not her own, and she rose and walked to the window. It would be easier not to see—better and kinder to look away from his mortification.

"I was thinking," she began lamely, pressing her hot cheek against the cool pane, "you ought to get back to New York."

She heard the sharp intake of his breath behind her, and a grotesque fancy of him in the pose of resignation flashed across her mind. But she did not turn her head. She was afraid, afraid to verify her thought,—afraid to convict him of play-acting. She hurried on with her mission, shutting her mind to the farce that flickered across it as across a screen.

"And so," she said, "and so—" It was hard to do, and still she must do it, she must acquit him of the indictment in her mind. "And so I had a little saved up and I brought it."

She heard his chair pushed back, and then a hand was laid upon her shoulder. Thank God, he had interrupted her offer. He had heard her but half out and would hear no more. The honor of her idol had been preserved. She turned toward him—and saw him grinning like a satyr beyond her shoulder.

"I knew you would do it; I knew I could count on you," he was saying. "The others failed. Stupid, terror-stricken cravens—afraid for their miserable money. Weighing it in the balance with my friendship, measuring my freedom and work in the terms of their dirty gold. I've done with friends like that—done with them. Hereafter I choose friends like you, Sonia—the poor who stand by the poor. When you came to-day, I confess I wondered at your

spending the fare to come to me, when the same money would have brought me to New York. But I did not know you. I did not realize what a splendid profligate you could be."

Springing like a panther, he circled the room, rubbing his hands together, chuckling to himself. At his abandoned place at the table he drew his chair up again and fell upon the food.

Sonia stood by the window, white and still. She had no

A MAN'S PERSONAL
AFFAIRS
AT HIS OWN
BUSINESS
ON THE
STAGE

words. Even her thoughts refused to compass the revelations of the moment. She had orations prepared for his refusal, but for this eager acquiescence with her offer, his avid appropriation of her sacrifice, she had only the stony judgment of the betrayed. She had come to batter down his resistance, and she found she had been trapped into an offer of her all, had played up to him in satire on friendship.

He did not look up from his plate, but his tongue, now inarticulate with food, now loosed with pampered egotism, mounted up and up its well-worn ladder of phrases. When he had finished his breakfast, he rose and threw his strong arms outward.

"Lord," he shouted, "I feel as strong as an ox already. Let's see. There's a train at twelve. We can't



M. LEON
DRAWING

pack and catch that. We'll even have to hustle to get the six o'clock."

He opened the door to the kitchen and called to his wife. She came, visibly alarmed. There was something almost maniacal in the man's excitement, in his oblivion to everything but his release. Sonia looked at the wrecked woman at the door, and back at the frenzied man, and wondered how often such a scene had presaged change and hardship for her.

"Mary," he purred in his best cathedral tone, "I'm going back to New York. No, not to the church,"—as he saw the unworded hope on her lips. "No—never again will I be an ass braying in a pulpit. I'm going back to get the voice of the multitude in my ears—back to stir the cauldron."

"But us?" Her face was pale, and she leaned upon a chair.

"You? Oh, yes, you! Why, I've got a plan for you, too. Just thought of it now. There's a woman in New York—a woman with money. She stood by me in the trouble in the church—applauded the Minor Prophets and cheered the *Drain Man*. She's been in Europe a year—but she's back by this time, I hope. I can't do anything with her by letter—but if I can see her, I can get her to buy this place. That will give me money to start—and to pay the butcher and grocer. I can't have duns following me around the country—they take the joy out of my life. Then when that's done there'll be enough left to rent a cottage in the village for you and the children. Once I get to New York I can talk managers into giving me Lyceum dates. And I've thought of vaudeville—I may go into that. Anyway, Mary, you'd better get at my packing. You know what I usually take."

"I ought to—I've packed for you often enough," the woman retorted with something like spirit, as she left the room. For a moment, Sonia wanted to laugh—to shriek and hold her sides at the grim waggery of events. So hers was not the only friendship that was to be bled. So she was not the only spiritual friend who consoled his loneliness. She clutched the little wad of bills in her muff and bit her teeth into

her lips to hold back the hysteria that welled up from the deep wound within her. Amadon came to the window and stood beside her, mistaking the mood that twitched at the corners of her mouth.

"Sonia, my friend," he murmured in her ear, "do not grieve for me. If one could grow used to a crown of thorns I should say I am used to that. But let us not talk of me—let us talk of you and the renewed hope you have brought into my life."

HE leaned toward her, and she drew away. All at once, as if pain had cut away her blindness, she saw the thick flesh of his face, the heavy lips, the long, sensuous fingers.

"My mind has been working fast," he went on, "since you came, Sonia. You are a woman worthy of me—a woman glorious enough to serve society through dedicating herself to me. This is a little matter to-day—your coming here with the money to put me on my feet again. But it shows me you know what friendship—what love—means. We must see more of each other. We must reach our perfected development, side by side. If I go into vaudeville,—and the more I think of it, the better I like that idea,—the howl of the maggot-minded crew need not matter. A man's personal affairs are his own business on the stage. We could arrange—"

He got no farther. The chill of Sonia's white anger penetrated the thick shell of his egotism, and he stopped. She locked her hands together in her muff over the little wadded roll of bills. Those dollars had meant a lot to her and to her father—inexpensive habits and clothes, abstinence from theaters, sometimes even from books. They were worthy dollars earned by worthy work and not lightly to be cast aside on a clown. He read her silence, and trembling in his threatened greed, hastened to override her anger.

"Mary," he called, striding to the stairs, "put in my cassock. That vaudeville idea appeals—"

But Sonia heard no more. She had closed the door of the house behind her and turned into the road that led to the village.

The Pink- Edged Note Paper

*Can you
not blackmail
? be wiser to
work and not
with the police.*



THESE detective stories have made their instantaneous success because they are **real**. But even the Red Book readers who admired them most have not realized just how **real**. It is time to clear the mystery of Mr. Froest's identity. Frank Froest is not a nom de plume of some famous author, as many supposed. It is the writer's name. Mr. Froest is the most trusted and the most feared detective in England. Until a few years ago, he was Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard, the highest post in detective service. He has pitted his wits against the keenest criminals in all parts of the world—the United States, Brazil, South Africa, Argentine and Mexico. More than once he has been borrowed from England by the United States Government, whose thanks he has received for his successful work on its behalf here and in England. He holds the record in Europe for the number of arrests of desperate American criminals. Many attempts have been made on his life, but his resourcefulness, tact and enormous physical strength always carried him through. Another series of his stories will begin in an early issue of *The Red Book Magazine*.

By Frank Froest, M. V. O.

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD CULTER

ROCKWARD'S hand was shaking, and his strong, heavy face was quivering as he finished. Yet he was held by common repute a man completely beyond human emotion—a man whose whole soul was wrapped in the collection of millions.

"If it is blackmail, why haven't they demanded money in the letter? I'd have paid anything—anything rather than the girl should run the risk. Here's three days gone since she vanished." He was working himself into a petulant anger unusual for a man of his temperament. "If your people had taken it in hand at first, you might have done something.

As it is I've employed two confounded agencies, and we're not an inch nearer finding her."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Rockward," said Barraclough. "If we had known when you first reported it that your daughter had been abducted, we might have handled it. You see," he went on soothingly, "more than ten thousand people are reported missing to the police every year. Very few of them have committed any criminal offense, and in the majority of cases there is some perfectly natural explanation of why they went away. There'd be no end of trouble if the department went chasing after each one. All that can be done is to cir-

culate a description and have men keep their eyes open. But you can rely that now we have something to go on in Miss Rockward's case, she will turn up safe and well in the end."

The millionaire offered his cigar-case. "Forgive me, Mr. Barraclough; I'm a little overstrained," he said. "You do your utmost, and if you want money, call upon me—never mind how much."

Detective-Inspector Barraclough did not often smoke half-crown Havanas, and he took one now with gratitude. He could understand the millionaire's feeling in the circumstances and make allowances. But in spite of his professional optimism,—a detective, like a doctor, is bound to have a surface optimism in dealing with outsiders,—it was with a perplexed mind that he made his way back to headquarters to lay the matter before his chief.

"IT'S a bit out of the ordinary run, sir," he said in the privacy of the Superintendent's room. "Rockward's half off his head—and I don't wonder. Miss Elsie Rockward's a young girl—she'll be nineteen next June—and the old man would have spoiled her if he could. That's nothing to the point, though. As a matter of fact she went out, according to the servants, at eleven o'clock on Monday morning—three days ago. She was believed to have been going to Regent Street. Anyway, she's not been seen since. This morning Mr. Rockward had a letter. This is what it says." He produced a document and read:

"SIR: This is to inform you that your daughter is safe and well. She will be permitted to return to you unharmed in probably less than a week from to-day, provided you comply with a certain request which may be made to you and which will cost you nothing. This is not blackmail. You will be wise to remain quiet and not approach the police."

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"There's more than one kind of blackmail," commented the Chief. "In some city deals, for instance, if Rockward could be induced to throw his weight one way or the other, it would tip the balance."

"Yes." Barraclough sucked in his lower lip. "Of course, I've not lost sight of that. I suppose I have a free hand."

"Entirely. And good luck to you."

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In their little studio on the second story, the staff photographers were busy with the letter that had been sent to Rockward. One of the shirt-sleeved assistants came to tell Barraclough that all was ready. He followed the man up to a narrow, windowless room at one end of which stood a square white screen. The photographer touched a switch, and the screen alone remained illuminated. Then he inserted a slide in the magic lantern, and the letter, magnified enormously, leaped into being.

Very carefully Barraclough examined the enlargement, word by word and letter by letter. He had had the thing thrown on the screen, not because he had any definite idea as to what he was to look for, but on the general principle that it should be submitted to the minutest possible examination. At last he came to the final word and drew back. "Thanks," he said. "It doesn't help much, but that isn't your fault. By the way, have you got the focus right? The edges of the letter seem to be in the shade."

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"Note-paper good—vellum, very best quality, I should say," commented Cranley. "It's an educated writing, though it's disguised. No finger-prints, sir? That's a pity. I imagine whoever wrote this is not an ordinary crook. Maybe one of Rockward's friends in the city."

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"Right you are. I'll go along to see them. You'd better stay on tap here till I come back. I may want you."

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any wrong'un who's been ill lately—or who's had illness in the place where he's staying.... Yes, yes.... it doesn't matter what for. I can't tell you over the wire. Get on to it as soon as you can, sonny. Get some one to help you if you can.... Me?... Oh yes, I'll be about.... I'll either drop in or ring up. I've got a lot of business to do."

He hung up the receiver and wended his way eastwards. It was a warm day, and by the time he had reached the "Convent and Garter" off the Commercial Road, he was glad to turn into the gilded and plated saloon. He ordered a lime-juice and soda and leaned against the bar with the air of a man to whom nothing mattered. All the while his eyes were quietly searching the groups of customers.

Presently he beckoned to a group of three, and they greeted him with deference. One would never have guessed from their joyous manner and their anxiety to pay for his drinks—which he would not permit—that they were each mentally checking off any secret exploits of theirs that might have excited the attention of a staff man from Scotland Yard.

Something of the same scene was enacted at Blackfriars, at Islington, Brixton, and half a dozen other districts of London. Barraclough was always genial, willing to buy drinks and talk over affairs. There was nothing of the stern, iron-handed, clumsy officer of police, beloved of the novelist, about him. Had he not strictly confined himself to non-intoxicating drinks, it would have been a drunken man who reeled back to headquarters. As it was, disappointment and physical weariness were plain on his face when he dropped into the chair.

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"That was a neat job," broke in Billy. "Some one's split up a hundred and twenty-odd thousand, and all you get is George and the stool-pigeon."

it into the waste-paper basket. "Not a bit of good," he declared. Then as Cranley's puzzled gaze met his: "I meant some infectious disease—I ought to have made that clear. Ah well!" He yawned wearily and drew out his watch. "Feel inclined to make a night of it, Cranley? It's eight o'clock. Let's have a bit of dinner and drop into the Palace and forget all about things for an hour."

Doggedness is one of the most valued attributes a member of the Criminal Investigation Department can possess, and Barracrough had a reputation for that quality. He had a bull-dog tenacity in following up a case until he had shaken it to pieces, that had on occasion served better than brilliant inspirations.

At ten o'clock he and Cranley had begun a fresh tour—this time of the supper-rooms and restaurants of the West End. The sergeant was puzzled—more puzzled than he would have cared to admit. He could have grasped it if they had been seeking some particular crook who could have given definite information. But apparently Barracrough was merely questing around in search of a scent. With the reticence which he sometimes displayed even to his most intimate colleagues, he would vouchsafe nothing beyond that he wanted to find a criminal who had recently been in some house where there was an infectious disease. But for the life of him Cranley could not see how an infectious disease could be connected with the threatening letter that had been written to the millionaire.

But everything has an end. A string band was making an undercurrent of melody to the laughter and conversation of hundreds of men and women clustered in twos and threes about little tables under shaded lights, as Barracrough and Cranley entered the basement of one of the great supper-rooms—where no one ever dreamed of taking supper. A frock-coated under-manager caught a glimpse of them out of the tail of his eye, and promptly threaded his way towards them. Barracrough laughed.

"Just having a walk around—that's all," he explained. "Nothing to get alarmed about. We know you're always pleased to see us—eh, Cranley?"

The official smiled and rubbed his hands. The proprietors liked to be on good terms with the police. "We're very careful—you know that, Mr. Barracrough."

"Sure," agreed the detective cheerfully. "You've got your license to consider. I suppose you'll give a certificate of character to everyone here—men and women."

"We see that everyone behaves himself," said the under-manager. "Where would you like to sit?"

Cranley was looking over Barracrough's shoulder into one of the big mirrors. "There's Big Billy sitting at the eighth table on your right," he said.

"We'll go and have a talk with Billy," said Barracrough. He picked his way along the tier of tables and dropped a hand heavily on the shoulder of the fat man who was seated with his back towards them.

Big Billy sprang to his feet with a start, and a liquor glass tinkled in fragments on the carpet. "Snakes!" he ejaculated. "Is it you, Mr. Barracrough? You shouldn't do that. You gave me the jumps."

"Sorry, Billy," said the detective penitently. "I'll be more careful another time." He sat down and indicated another chair for Cranley. "How's things? I haven't had a talk with you on business for a long time."

The twinkling little ferret eyes set in the heavy, broad face became a trifle apprehensive. Big Billy did not like the officer's tone. His nerves had been a little shaken by the sudden manner in which Barracrough had announced his arrival. "Business?" he said, with a laugh that ill-concealed his nervousness. "I didn't know that you wanted to talk business with me or I'd have called on you before this."

Barracrough crossed his legs. "Oh, it isn't exactly business, Billy. We spotted you just now, and we thought we'd like a talk over old times—didn't we, Cranley? I'm sure your lady friends will excuse us for ten minutes."

"Right you are. Run away for a little while, kids," said Billy.

The two girls who had been enjoying Billy's hospitality seemed inclined

to resent this abrupt dismissal. Cranley, however, had half turned his head, and the under-manager was rapidly approaching. They rose and swept away haughtily contemptuous. "And now what'll you have?" said Barraclough.

"Absinthe will do me," said Billy. And as the detective gave the order: "Now guv'nors, what's the lay?"

There are few more homey untruths than that which insists that there is honor among thieves. If the axiom held, the work of the professional detective forces of the world would be ten-fold more anxious and arduous than it is. In isolated cases, now and again, criminals will keep faith one with another. But such occasions are very rare. Weakness, jealousy, revenge, the mere desire to curry favor with the police, are motives on which it is possible for the tactful detective to play. The devious channels of information that run to Scotland Yard from the underworld are a great asset.

"Oh, nothing much, Billy." Barraclough lay idly back and began to toy with an empty glass. "Seen anything of Dongley Green lately?"

The fat man wrinkled his brows. He was all alert to fathom the detective's intentions and whether any harm to himself was evident. He sipped his absinthe. "Dongley," he repeated. "Why, Dongley went down at Nottingham for six years, three months ago. Didn't you know that?"

"Come to think of it, so he did," said Barraclough. "It had slipped my mind. He always was unlucky, was Dongley. Do you remember that jewel business in Bond Street? You were on top then?"

The reminiscence was apparently not pleasing to Big Billy. He shot a malevolent glance at the detective. He remembered how Dongley and he had concocted a neat little scheme to attack a certain five-hundred-guinea ring; how Dongley in the neatest of morning dress and with a small piece of chewing gum in his mouth had walked into the shop inspecting trays and trays of gems; and how he had at last failed properly to fix the ring he had abstracted to the ledge of the counter with the chewing gum, whence Billy was later on to take

it when he strolled in as an independent customer after the trouble had died down. Dongley had worked all right up to a point, but while he was being searched, the ring and the chewing gum had dropped from their hiding place. It had been a narrow shave for Billy, against whom nothing could be proved.

"He was a clumsy dog," he growled.

"Wasn't he in with Gwennie Lyne for a time?" queried Barraclough with the air of one trying to keep up a languishing conversation.

Big Billy settled himself heavily. "That old hag always was a hoodoo," he said. "She always seems to slide along, but anyone who works with her seems to catch it. There was Dongley. Now poor old Brixton George is in for it. Kid Foster has been staying at her place down at Tooting, and he pretty near died of typhoid or measles or something. I'd like to wring her neck for her."

Cranley shot a significant glance at his superior, who seemed to be suppressing a yawn. Here was the information that Barraclough had been seeking, and yet it seemed to make little enough impression on him.

"Ah yes," he said. "Brixton George. He was committed for trial a week or two back with one of the bank clerks. The Great Southern Bank forgery, wasn't it?"

"That was a neat job," broke in Billy. "Some one's split up a hundred and twenty-odd thousand, and all you get is George and the stool-pigeon—that is, unless you've got some one in line." He looked cunningly across the table.

Barraclough smilingly shook his head. "I'd trust you, Billy, if I knew, of course. I'm not handling that case. Well, we won't keep you any longer from your friends. So long, Billy."

HE thrust his arm through Cranley's as they got outside and hurried him with long, quick steps to Trafalgar Square, where they picked up a taxi. "The best piece of luck I've had to-day," insisted the inspector more than once.

At Great Derby Street the cab halted,

and Barraclough hurried into headquarters. When he returned ten minutes later he brought with him a third man, a sloping-shouldered individual with shrewd eyes and a light mustache. "Three of us ought to be enough even for Gwennie," he said. "I've sent some one to drag Watford out of bed—he's looking after the Great Southern Bank case. But I doubt if we'll want him."

Cranley tugged at his mustache. "I'm not quite clear what the point is yet, sir," he said.

Barraclough's eyes twinkled, and he regarded the sergeant whimsically. "That don't go, Cranley," he smiled. "I'm too old a bird to show my hand until I'm dead sure. I'll tell you all about it some time—when it's needful for you to know."

The car whizzed on, and conversation languished. In half an hour it drew up panting at the corner of one of the neat, respectable streets of villas that fringe Tooting Common. Barraclough laughed as he got out and cast a glance down the row of tiny front gardens arranged in geometrical designs of calceolarias and geranium. "Civil Service clerks, small business men and maiden ladies," he commented. "Wonder what some of the neighbors will say when they learn who Gwennie is. Come on, boys. You'd better wait, driver."

Not a soul did they meet as they sauntered down the dimly lighted street scrutinizing the numbers on each side. At last Cranley lifted his hand in signal, and his companions joined him outside the gate at which he was standing.

"No. 107, sir," he said.

They advanced up the path, and Barraclough plied knocker and bell. In a little, a light was switched on at an upper window. They heard footsteps. Then a light sprang up in the hall, and the door opened.

A skeleton of a man with deep-sunken eyes and a dressing-gown hanging lankly about him stood peering out at them. "Well," he demanded curtly, "what is it?"

Cranley leaned nonchalantly against the door post so that it was impossible to shut the door. Barraclough, dazzled somewhat by the sudden glare of elec-

tric light, wrinkled his brows at the interlocutor.

"That you, Velson?" he said, as he picked out the features of the man.

"How's Gwennie?"

"I don't know you," retorted the other. "And my name's not Velson."

Barraclough stepped inside. "No, very likely not," he admitted coolly. "Shall we cut all that out?"

A sudden blaze of wrath flamed in the dull, sunken eyes of the little man. He withdrew his right hand from beneath the folds of his dressing-gown, and the blue barrel of a revolver showed in the electric light. "No funny business," he warned. "You guys can't play it on me."

Cranley leaped swiftly. The revolver cracked noisily as he overbore the little man and they fell a wriggling heap on the tiles. But Velson stood no chance. In rather less than sixty seconds he was disarmed and handcuffed.

Barraclough picked up the revolver. "I knew you were a gun-man, Velson," he observed quietly, "but I didn't think you were a fool. You wouldn't have pulled out the weapon unless you were mighty frightened that something was going to happen."

"You go to blazes," said the prisoner sulkily.

"All right." The Inspector added the formal warning: "No need to tell you we're police officers. Anything you say may be used as evidence, you know. You look after him, Conder. Take him into the dining-room. Cranley, you'd better stay at the door."

There were movements upstairs, the shuffling of footsteps, the sound of voices. Then the authoritative tone of a woman could be heard apparently ordering the frightened servants back to bed. As Barraclough reached the foot of the stairs the woman descended, dignified and self-possessed. She was somewhere about fifty years of age, not uncomely—indeed at one time she must have been possessed of striking beauty. Her complexion was as delicate as a child's, and only the grim mouth and an indefinable quality about the velvety blue eyes gave any plausibility to the supposition that she was a crook.

There had been plenty of time for her alert wits to gather what had happened. Her face showed no sign of perturbation. She smiled sweetly at Barracrough.

"Good morning, Gwennie," he said, urbanely. "It's a pity to have had to wake you up. Suppose you know what we've come about?"

The smile persisted. "Good morning, Mr. Barracrough. I see it's gone one, so it is good morning." If Barracrough had hoped to surprise any admission out of her, he was disappointed.

"Is there anyone else in the house?" he asked.

She shook her head. "Only the two servant maids. But you won't take my word for it, I know. You'll search anyway."

"That's so. You're a sensible woman. Come on."

He half led, half pulled her into the dining-room where Conder and the other prisoner were seated. She took a chair with composure. "You've overdone it this time, Mr. Barracrough," she said. "What are you pulling us for?"

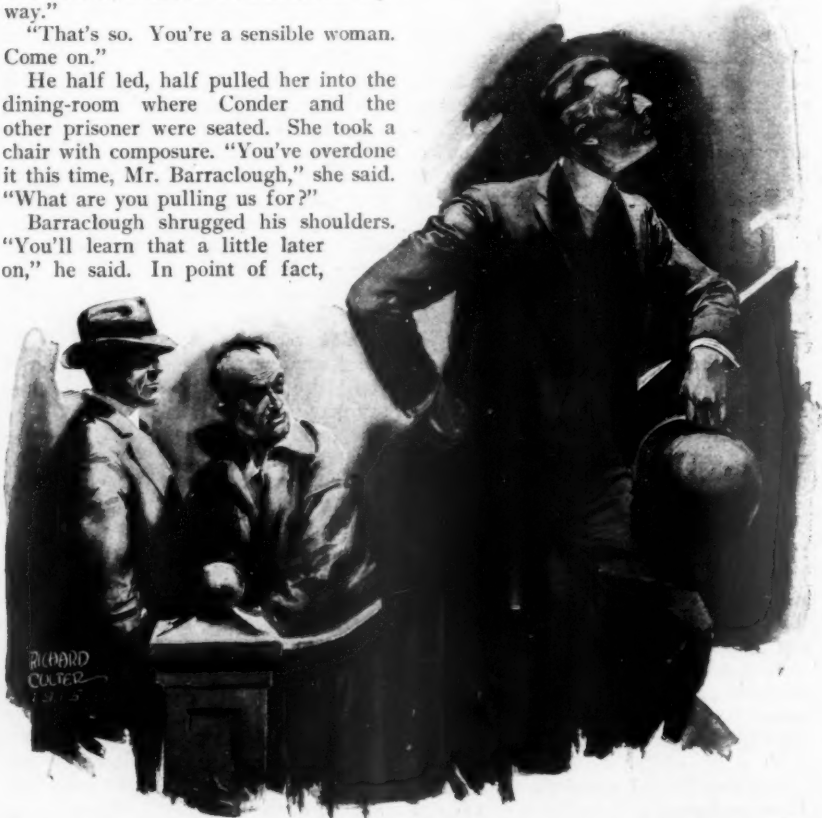
Barracrough shrugged his shoulders. "You'll learn that a little later on," he said. In point of fact,

he was still uncertain himself as to what the charge might be. "Meanwhile, if you will tell us where Miss Rockward is, it may save trouble."

She elevated her eyebrows. "Miss Rockward! Who is she?"

The detective turned abruptly away. "I'm going to search the house," he said.

He went through all the twelve rooms that composed the villa, to make certain that Gwennie was speaking the truth when she said that there was no one else in the place but the maid-servants. From the two servants, all in a flutter by the unexpected raid, he extracted little Mrs. Frankton—which was the name by which they knew Gwennie—



There had been plenty of time for her alert wits to gather what had happened. She smiled sweetly at Barracrough.

had employed them about six weeks ago—that was when she took the house.



They understood that she was going to conduct it as a boarding-house. There had been only two boarders so far—Mr. Green (Barracough understood that Velson was meant) and a Mr. Shilworth. Mr. Shilworth was a commercial traveler. He was now away on business—had been away for four days.

Here was food for thought. Miss Rockward had been missing three days. Barracough shot a question at the more intelligent and least flustered of the two girls. Yes, Mr. Shilworth had been away before—sometimes for one day, never more than two. He was a middle-aged man with a scar on the right temple, had a pointed beard, slightly auburn, and light hair, tow colored.

Barracough got them to point out the rooms which had been occupied by Gwennie herself, by "Green" and by "Shilworth." It was in the drawer of a writing-table in the apartment of the

commercial traveler that he came across what he wanted. He descended to the dining-room and addressed the two prisoners.

"See here, you two people. You know as well as I do that I've no right to question you, but I may as well tell you that I'm not on the bluff. I've got evidence that you were concerned in the abduction of Miss Rockwood, and I know *why*. You can't do any good by holding her up any longer. We're bound to find her—and Kid Foster, you know. Now where is she?"

Gwennie fixed an appraising gaze on Barracough. "You're a gentleman, Mr. Barracough," she said. "Will you let up on us if we put you on the line?"

"I can't make bargains, I'm afraid," said Barracough.

Gwennie placidly crossed her arms. "Then you'll have to work out your own business," she observed.

PRESENTLY Detective - Inspector Watford faced Detective-Inspector Barracough as they sat in two of Gwennie's softly-cushioned arm-chairs. Gwennie and Velson were safely on their way by taxicab to King Street Police Station, and a more minute search of the house than Barracough had been able to make was being systematically conducted by the three men Watford had brought with him.

The latter tapped the bowl of an empty pipe thoughtfully upon the heel of his boot. "I wish I were sure you hadn't dragged me out of bed on a wild goose chase," he observed.

Barracough stood up. "Of all the infernal ingratitude—why, man, it's as clear as mud. Here's this forgery committed. You suspect one of the bank clerks and keep young Elsleigh under observation. You find him friendly with Brixton George, and like a sensible man you send 'em both down. They're both as tight as oysters—and there's a hundred thousand of the best stowed away somewhere that you can't lay your finger on."

"Well?" said Watford drily.

"Well! It stands to reason that there's

something behind it. They've briefed Luton, K.C., to defend them at the trial. Some one's finding the money—and that some one has got the hundred thousand stowed away in an old stocking. Now you told me the other day that the defense intends to apply for an adjournment when the case comes up."

"Well?" repeated Watford.

"There'll be an application for bail," went on Barraclough. "The rest of the gang know Brixton George. They've got to get him out if they want him to save their own skins. He would talk too much if they deserted him. That's what Luton is for—to get bail—and then George could slip the country. Now the judge is bound to want a person of reputation as well as financial standing for bail—a man like Rockward, for instance."

One of Watford's men now entered and handed him a couple of letters and three bank pass-books. His face cleared. "By the great horn spoon, you're right, Willie. Here's letters from the Kid. Why on earth Gwennie kept them I don't know. Where did you find 'em?"

"Stuffed between the mattress and the spring of her bed," replied the man.

"Listen to this," said Watford. He read: 'You're a real wonder, Gwennie. After you had given the girl the dope in the tea-room in Bond Street I got her away to Charing Cross as simply as A. B. C. She kept up her daze right across the water, though I got a bit of a shock at Boulogne when I thought she was coming round. However, it was a false alarm. We got here safe enough to your friend at Rue Vaillant 24.'

"Then there's the other letter: 'I went round to see the kid this morning. She's a little Tartar, but I guess T—will learn her to be good. I am staying at the Bristol and am feeling better.'

"The Bristol, eh?" remarked Barraclough. "That's going some. I suspect the Kid will have worse lodgings before long. Will you go out and burn up the wires, or shall I?"

"I'll go," said Watford. "So long."

THE unraveling of a skein, once the right end of a mystery is found, proceeds rapidly. It was ten o'clock in the

morning when Barraclough finished ransacking the house and made his way to Scotland Yard. He found Watford in his room with a packed bag in one corner.

"Paris?" he asked.

"Yep," replied his friend. "I'm off to fetch the Kid. The business is well weighed up now. Those bank books show that all the money has been paid into the account of Gwennie and her pals, and we'll have no difficulty in proving the case. The *Brigade de Sûreté* have nobbled Foster and found the girl. Rockward is going over with me. He asked to be remembered to you and said that if the Commissioner approved, he would like to hand you over a little check."

"That so?" said Barraclough wearily. "That's good."

Watford tapped him on the shoulder. "See here, Willie, I'm puzzling how you got on to this in the first place. You might tell."

Barraclough sighed and dragged the note that had been sent to Rockward out of his pocket. "See how that's edged with pink?" he said. "That's what got me on to it. Of course that edging was bound to attract anyone's attention. I didn't know whether it was important or not. So I took it to the people most likely to know—a firm of paper merchants. They told me that the paper—technically a cream-tinted vellum—was made of esparto grass, and that aniline sulphate solution would turn it pink. That didn't seem to help much. I asked if anything else would have done it. Then I got my tip. It seemed that sulphur fumes might have made the edgings—they had heard of a case where it had happened when a room had been fumigated."

"I bit right on to that. A room would probably be fumigated after some infectious or contagious disease, and that was what I had to look for. I had gone right over London before I hit Big Billy and got the straight griffin. That's all there was to it."

"Quite simple, my dear Barraclough," grinned Watford. "There's the Guv'nor in his room waiting to pat you on the back."

The Hungry Little Girl

BINKERMAN, the animal man, took her in, and then proceeded to forget her—at least, he thought he had forgotten her.

By Leslie Adams

Co-Author of "The Husbands of Henrietta."

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE PORTER HOSKINS

BINKERMAN sat a long time in the tiny office at the rear of his store. Contrary to his custom in the morning, he was idle. The account books over which he usually busied himself to so little purpose were closed. What use to collect those bills?

On his desk, purring contentedly, sat a great gray Angora cat which occasionally blinked its green eyes open to see if Binkerman showed any signs of petting it. Over the seven-foot partition which separated the office from the store proper clambered a small black monkey. It swung down noiselessly to the top of the desk and gave a quick yank to the Angora's tail. With a startled scream, the cat jumped and whirled upon its tormentor, but the monkey, chattering derisively, leaped out of reach to the top of the partition and crouched there, pulling to pieces the tuft of gray fur which it held in its hands.

The door opened quickly and a girl entered.

"I'm sorry, sir, but Fifi got out of her cage," she apologized. "Come, Fifi." She held out her arms invitingly. The monkey started to climb down.

"Not Fifi," Binkerman interrupted.

"Oh, I forgot," the girl replied, "but she won't come if I call Bruneilde."

"There shall be no French names by Binkerman's Animal Store," declared the proprietor. "At least I can do so much for the Fatherland."

"Very well, sir," the girl acknowledged meekly. "Come, Bruneilde, Bruneilde."

The monkey gazed doubtfully at the girl and looked around to see whom she might be calling. Then it climbed back again out of reach.

"I can't make her come down." She turned to her employer helplessly. "She doesn't know that name."

"Bruneilde," said the man without raising his voice.

The monkey ceased playing and looked at him inquiringly.

"*Komm hierher*," Binkerman commanded pleasantly.

The monkey obeyed.

AS it passed the cat, a quick paw shot out with claws extended to strike, but at a sharp hiss from the man it paused in mid-air, and the Angora settled down sullenly with feet and tail doubled up under it out of reach.

"See," exclaimed Binkerman triumphantly, "Bruneilde knows she is Bruneilde. She comes to me."

"Yes," the girl laughed, "but with you it is different. Monkeys know what you think, no matter what you say."

The man questioned her face searchingly with short-sighted eyes through horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Always, Katy, you are making fun of your boss."

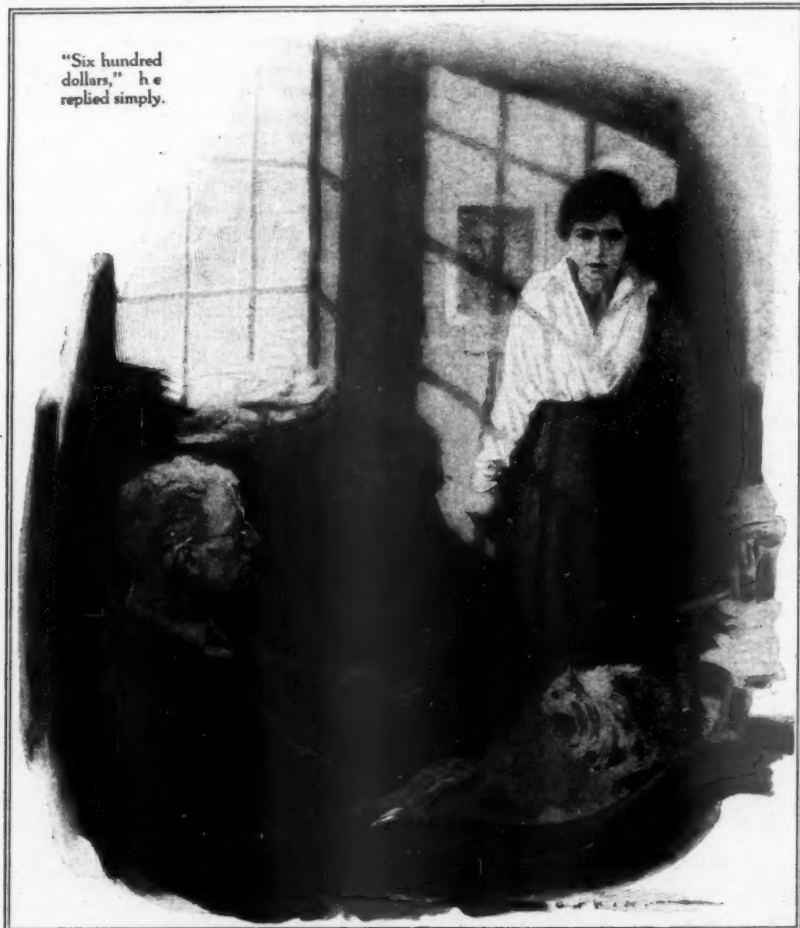
She was very like a beautiful monkey herself, if there are any such. Sharply

alert, with small features and quick, tiny hands, she moved quietly and deftly. In her eyes was the haunting look of animals that try to understand.

When Binkerman had come to this country after he had served his time in his artillery regiment, he had set up in business on Sixth Avenue near the New

York Public Library. It gave him something to do while waiting for "the day." He was nearly forty now, although his spectacles, which he preferred to nose-glasses, made him look older. Without them, his face was singularly young.

With Katy, it had been much the same



"Six hundred dollars," he replied simply.

He had a way with animals, as Katy

as with the animals. He had found her wet and shivering one miserable December night, struggling in the grip of a Broadway "cop" who gave her the choice of getting off the streets or being "run in."

Her dirty, homely face and angular,

immature figure gave the lie derisive to the policeman's charge against her. Binkerman unhesitatingly employed the forcible argument of a five-dollar bill on the officer and took Katy over to the animal store to dry out and be fed. Without any definite arrangement being made, she remained. Binkerman scarcely noted what she did, except to be pleased at the extra time he had for reading ponderous German authorities on everything from flora and fauna to aeroplanes.

Neither did he notice from behind his fortification of abstract intellect that Katy in eight years had grown up. To Binkerman, the world did not change much. His near-sighted eyes were not quite as good as they had been when at thirty he had come to America. He had dried up considerably, and his hair was curly gray instead of curly brown as it had been. But he had not noticed. In his mind he was still the same erect, dashing artilleryman that he had been when he laid aside the uniform to wait for the call.

And so Katy, too, was still the ugly little gamin that he had rescued from starvation. If he had observed at all that she did her hair differently and wore longer skirts, it was only subconsciously. She attended to most of the routine of the business for him and paid herself a salary adequate to cover her board and lodging and what clothes she needed. She had told of this arrangement and he had acquiesced in it without noticing the details.

"It is good that you come in just now, Katy," said Binkerman, stroking the monkey, who sat docilely on his knee. "Is there a customer in the store?"

"No."

"Good. Then we shall talk."

THE girl closed the door and put her back against it, with her hands on the knob. Easily graceful, she was unconscious, as was the man, of the slender beauties of her delicately shaped figure. Also she was unconscious of the tender look in her eyes with which she regarded her employer. He never noticed anything about her, and she had grown careless. No use to disguise something that was never seen.

"I have sold the store."

"Sold it?" she echoed. It was unbelievable. She knew no other interest. The world was just the world, but Binkerman's Animal Store—why, that was home.

"Yes," he said stiffly, reaching over to the desk and arranging some already orderly papers to conceal the fact that he too regarded the breaking-up of his life as a calamity.

She made no comment, but stood there waiting; so he went on. "I go back to my regiment—to the big guns of the Fatherland." He paused soberly. "What are you thinking of that, Katy?"

"I am thinking that it will be very hard for you to see the horses killed that haul those big guns."

He started. "How could you know that out of all the things in the world I should be thinking also of that?"

"I don't know," she answered simply. "Perhaps it is because I understand you."

"The store," he continued precisely, as if issuing military orders, "I have sold out to Kettler and Company."

"Not to Herman Kettler, whom you hate?"

"Yes. I hate him, but he is kind to animals." He stopped, troubled. "Maybe he would take you too."

"Why?" she questioned derisively. "Because he is kind to animals?"

"What will become of you?"

She laughed. "I will take care of myself."

"But," he objected, "I have taken care of you so long."

Katy smiled knowingly to herself. What use to explain that she had been taking care of him, not he of her? She thought for a moment of complaining because he had not notified her earlier of his intention, but she realized on reflection that it simply had not occurred to him.

"How much did Kettler pay for the stock?" Her practical mind leaped to the financial details of the transaction.

"Six hundred dollars," he replied simply. "Three hundred now and the rest in six months."

She stood aghast.

"Why," she exclaimed almost angrily,



As the cages were carried out, he spoke a kindly word to each of the

"it is worth at least three times that much."

"I know, but since the war, times are hard and animal business is dull. Be-

sides, three hundred dollars is all I need. Already I have bought my steamship ticket and have enough left for my outfit when I reach Berlin."



dogs. A collie with a litter of puppies he shook hands with gravely.

"But after that?" she questioned.

"After that I report to my regiment.

"But how will you get back?"

"It is not necessary to think of that,"

he said soberly. "According to figures, more than fifty per cent of the officers do not come back. So you see it is nothing to worry about."

A TINKLING bell in the shop announced the entrance of a customer, perhaps, although these days customers were pitifully few.

Katy went out to see.

Two men in overalls were propping open the double doors at the front of the store. A large wagon stood backed up to the curb.

All the animals seemed to know that something unusual was up. A confused chorus of barks, squeaks and bird-calls came from the serried ranks of cages.

In the midst of the confusion, Karl Binkerman himself came out from the little private office. The black monkey sat on his shoulder with a firm grip of its tiny paw in his curly gray hair.

Binkerman walked down the aisle of cages, speaking a quiet word of command here and bestowing a reassuring pat there until the hub-bub simmered down to a mere clatter of restless curiosity.

"Take the dogs first," he instructed the movers. "I can tell them it is all right and they will not be so frightened as the rabbits. It is hard to tell a rabbit anything."

They acquiesced respectfully. They were animal men, too, and respected Binkerman's knowledge.

As the cages were carried out, he spoke a kindly word to each of the dogs. A collie with a litter of puppies he shook hands with gravely. She stuck her paw out between the bars.

"Elsa," he said, "good-by. No one shall hurt those beautiful puppies. Remember that Kettler, no matter what I think of him, is good to animals. But if he should change your name back to Empress Josephine, you should bite him in the leg."

Then followed a mournful procession of chattering monkeys, unafraid and rather charmed with the idea of doing something different.

After them the cats, Persians, Angoras, Manx, long-hairs, short-hairs, with and without tails. Next, the white mice, guinea pigs, squirrels, parrots, canaries, rabbits and finally the resplendent gold fish flashing and glittering in their great glass aquarium.

Like a general conducting the

evacuation of a fortress, Binkerman directed every move; and sitting on his shoulder, Brunehilde with alert eyes took it all in.

But when all the cages were gone and the men came back once more, she uttered a protesting cry and leaped for the chandelier overhead and climbed up to the ceiling.

"Does that one go?" one of the men inquired respectfully.

"Yes," replied Binkerman, "everything goes. She knows it. —Brunehilde, you have to go too."

She chattered volubly but clung to her perch.

"No use to *parlez-vous* with me like that," he said good-naturedly. "I don't understand French any more."

"I can get a pole and poke her down," suggested the man.

"Poke her down!" repeated Binkerman scornfully. "That is not the way to treat an intelligent animal."

He spoke slowly and with emphasis in German: "*Brunehilde, komm hierher —mach schnell.*"

The monkey argued but came down a little way. When she stopped, Binkerman repeated, "*Komm,*" and she reluctantly descended some more.

At last she sat pathetically on the cross-bar of the chandelier, and he reached up and lifted her down. In his arms she clutched at his coat lapel and, whimpering, hid her face on his shoulder.

"Brunehilde," Karl Binkerman instructed, "you should break your heart quiet like a German."

To the man, he said, "Tell Kettler that Brunehilde should have a mirror to play with if she cries. She is only a woman, and it will make her forget me quicker than anything else."

He placed the monkey, which was now docile enough, in the arms of one of the men, and it was carried out, looking back at Binkerman with pleading, reproachful eyes that he pretended not to see.

BINKERMAN sighed as he looked around the barren store. "It's funny she should take on so. I didn't know she cared that much."

"I can understand a little how she feels," Katy ventured, a tear in her eye, for she too had been fond of Fifi-Brune-hilde.

"You can?" Binkerman repeated with some surprise. "I didn't know you ever lost anyone you really cared for. But then I don't believe I ever asked you much about yourself, did I?"

"No, you never did." The girl smiled at him tolerantly. He had always taken her and her history for granted.

"Anyway," he went on, "you are too young to have things affect you much."

"Too young? I'm twenty-two."

"Are you?" he asked incredulously, peering at her closely through his glasses. "Why, maybe you are. I guess it's so. And I never noticed."

In embarrassment at finding himself alone in the presence of a young lady whom he felt that he scarcely knew, Binkerman looked around his denuded shop helplessly.

"You are waiting for me to go too, aren't you?" Katy supplied his unspoken words. "I will leave right away if there is nothing further you want me to do."

Binkerman gazed at her in good-humored perplexity. "I find homes for all the animals, Katy, but I forgot you. I wish I knew somebody who would be kind to you."

"And give me a saucer of milk night and morning?" Katy laughed musically. Karl Binkerman noticed that it was a musical laugh, and he was fond of music.

"What will you do?" he inquired, shifting the burden of the solution to Katy's capable shoulders as he always had done with all the knotty problems that came up in his business affairs.

"I'll take care of myself," she assured him confidently.

He was struck by a sudden inspiration.

"How much money in the bank account?" he asked.

Katy smiled. "About fifty dollars."

"That shall be yours," he decided. "I will write you a check."

He led the way to the office. At his command Katy found the check-book and computed the balance. It was fifty-three dollars.

He sat at his desk and bending close to his work methodically dated and numbered a check.

"Pay to the order of Katy—" He paused, pen in hand, and wrinkled his forehead. "Katy, I am afraid that I am a dunderhead. I don't know what is your last name—maybe you told me once, but I have forgotten."

"Jones," she supplied obligingly.

"Katy Jones," he repeated. "No wonder I forgot it."

The check was written, and he held it out to her.

"Good-by, Katy." He drew her to the window. "If you don't mind, I will look at you once good so that over there I might never forget you." He waved his hand generally toward the Atlantic Ocean and examined carefully her fresh young face, which turned crimson under his scrutiny. "Now go, Katy, before I act not like a soldier."

He turned resolutely away from her and muttered more to himself than to her, "For an artilleryman, I get too much attached to things."

When he faced around again, Katy was gone.

THE remaining details of departure were very trifling—the way Binkerman attended to them. He simply locked his desk, which was to be called for later by a storage warehouse company, and walked out on the street.

There was little more trouble at the tiny flat around the corner, where Binkerman lived all by himself.

It was in an old-fashioned house that had been "converted." There was a modiste's shop on the first floor, and above that were three apartments. Binkerman's flat was up three flights of dark stairs that were carpeted with dirty, worn carpet that apparently never had to be renewed or cleaned because it was never seen in the dimly religious and economical gas light furnished by the landlord.

Once inside Binkerman's own door, however, everything was quite cleanly and cheerful. A remnant of military training had persisted through his absent-mindedness, and he kept house like a soldier in barracks.

With melancholy precision, he packed his belongings in a suit-case and a kit-bag. He was taking very few civilian clothes. They would only be needed for the passage over.

While he was still debating whether or not to pack his long artillery officer's sword, some one stumbled up the stairs and rapped at his door.

It was a messenger boy with a letter for him.

Wondering, he signed for it and let the boy go. People did not usually send special messengers to Karl Binkerman, the animal importer, at his home.

He opened the envelope only to find another one inside of it, tied around with string and sealed in several places with wax.

This was so curious that he took it to the front window, where the light was good, to examine it carefully before opening it.

There was writing on it. With difficulty he read:

Please open after passing Statue of Liberty, outward bound.

KATY.

With a laugh, Binkerman dropped it in his pocket. Who would ever have expected a youngster like Katy to be so thoughtful as to send him a steamer letter?

Leaving his baggage to be picked up at the last minute before sailing, he went to the German consul's office to get his identification papers.

In the suite occupied by the German representative he found a number of men waiting, bound upon the same errand as himself. Most of them were younger and had the marks of a military harness more freshly upon them. Binkerman saluted with clicking heels and a stiff hand as he came in. Then he sat down to wait his turn.

It took a long time, and it was afternoon before he was able to get an audience.

The consul examined his papers and asked him to sign certain documents.

Binkerman got out his horn-rimmed glass spectacles and taking the proffered pen, laboriously affixed his signature. The consul eyed him curiously.

"What's the trouble?" he asked kindly. "Not bad eyesight?"

Binkerman laughed apologetically. "Only a little. My eyesight was good enough for me to pass a captain's examination."

"Hm," the consul hummed. "How long ago?"

"In nineteen-three."

The consul thought a moment and then wrote on a blank which lay on his desk.

"Take this over to Doctor Stern," he suggested. "And then let me know what he says."

Slightly bewildered, Binkerman took the memorandum, and guided by an attaché he found his way to the office of the doctor. He discovered that the physician was an eye specialist.

When he was admitted to the inner office, the doctor, who was very brisk but kindly, and half again as old as Binkerman himself, tried his sight on various types at different distances.

"What branch of the service were you in?" he asked at length.

"Artillery."

"Hm!" The doctor also shook his head doubtfully as he made a penciled note on the slip of paper which Binkerman had brought him. "Will you please take that back to the consul?"

At the consul's office this time Binkerman was admitted more readily.

They were apparently waiting for him.

The officer examined the doctor's report and then placed his hand on Binkerman's knee.

"Captain Binkerman," he said gently, "I regret to tell you that it would be useless for you to report to your regiment. Doctor Stern informs me that your eyesight is failing very rapidly and is not good enough now to be depended upon."

BINKERMAN was staggered. It had never occurred to him that he might not be eligible. If he had lost an arm or a leg, that would be different. Besides, he had not noticed the increasing dimness of his vision. As his sight had grown less, his back had obligingly bent closer to his work. The curve had come in his spine so gradually that he had not

observed it. He thanked the consul and saluted again as he left the office.

In his rudderless state he cast about him helplessly. What should he do?

He would ask Katy. That is what he had always done every time a difficult problem presented itself, ever since she had unconsciously taken hold of his affairs.

He had gone clear to the store before he realized that she was not there. The empty windows greeted him forlornly. He looked in through the glass. Of course she was not there. All he could see was shadows, and at the far end of the long chamber a white blur where the rear windows were.

He would have to go to Katy's home. Very well, where was Katy's home? He tried to remember. He could not recollect that he had ever asked her where she lived. He had simply taken her presence at the store for granted. He knew she must have another existence besides the one he was acquainted with, but it had never occurred to him to inquire. He searched his pockets vainly for a memorandum of her address which he knew was not there.

But he did find her letter with the caption: "*Please open after passing Statue of Liberty, outward bound.*"

That request barred him from opening the letter now. She must have had some reason for wanting him to read it at that particular place. Therefore, it would not be fair to open it anywhere else.

What should he do? Binkerman's mind was nothing if not literal. With feverish haste to get his affairs settled, he halted a passing taxi and directed the driver to take him to the steamship wharves. At the dock, he dickered with the captain of a tramp tug to take him as a passenger for what the captain considered a ridiculous pleasure trip. The captain made no objection, however, when Binkerman offered to pay fifty dollars for the privilege, and in ten minutes they were under way.

While they were gingerly picking a course to the enlightener of the world, Karl Binkerman had an excellent opportunity to realize just how dependent he had been upon Katy. It was strange that he had never even noticed before

that morning that she had grown up. Until then he had never thought of her as pretty, either. Now his recollection of her was distinctly pleasant. There was a warm glow in his heart as he thought of seeing her again. He felt that when he found Katy all his troubles would be over. As soon as the tug passed the Statue of Liberty, Binkerman tore open his letter, and standing forward of the pilot house he held it close to his eyes as he read:

Dear Karl Binkerman:

You will never see me again, so I dare call you that.

It's hard to break your heart quiet like a German, as you told Brunchilde. I've been trying it ever since you told me 'good-by' at the shop this morning, and I can't do it. That's the reason these words are so blurry. The ink doesn't mix with the tears worth a cent.

I can't let you go without telling you that aside from you no one has ever been kind to me in all my life. I couldn't, like Brunchilde, hold the lapel of your coat and bury my face on your shoulder, although I wanted to. I'm glad you're not very observing or you would have noticed it.

I could never say these things to you directly. I couldn't even write them if I ever expected you to answer. You can't do that, because in all the time I've worked for you it never entered your head to inquire where I live. But just because I am going out of your life now for always, and because, oh because, Karl, I don't know what I am going to do with my days now that I shall not see you any more, it surely doesn't matter if I tell you that for every shrieking shell that goes hurtling over your head there is a prayer goes up for your safety from the lips and heart of—

KATY.

Karl Binkerman sighed. He knew now what his feeling for Katy had been. Until he had read her letter he had gropingly felt the need of her, but his emotions were now crystalized. All the more reason for finding her at once. But she had given no address. It was exasperating.

He told the captain to take him back to New York. He went to his flat, but it was more lonesome than ever. Everything that he had cared for, everything that had cared for him, he had sent



"I thought you had gone," she faltered.

away, Katy, Brunehilde, Elsa and all. Next to Katy, Brunehilde had cared most. He wondered if the little black monkey was mourning for him.

All of a sudden he wanted Brunehilde. At least he could make her happy. He grabbed his hat and went to the establishment of his rival, Kettler and Company.

Kettler himself was not in, but a clerk who did not know him asked if he could do anything for him.

Binkerman said he wanted to buy the monkey and described her.

"I am sorry, sir," the clerk replied, "but I sold that monkey just an hour ago."

"Sold her!" Binkerman repeated. "Who to? I must try to buy her back."

The clerk consulted his sales book. "It was to a lady. She could only pay fifty dollars on account, and Mr. Kettler was holding the monkey at a hundred. She was to pay the rest on time."

"Who is the lady and where does she live?"

The salesman looked at his record slip. "It's a Miss or Mrs. Jones," he said at length, "and I will give you a copy of her address," he added obligingly, producing at the same time the business card of Kettler and Company, upon which he scribbled a street and number.

ARMED with this, Binkerman, who believed in immediate action, proceeded to the address given him. It proved to be a boarding house. His ring was answered by the landlady in person, who regarded him with suspicious coldness when he mentioned that the person he wished to see bore the name of Jones.

"I'll see if she's in," she volunteered grudgingly, admitting him to the parlor. "She is just leaving to-day."

"Leaving?" Binkerman repeated pleasantly.

"Yes. This place aint no menagerie, and when I begin to take black monkeys for boarders you can call in the warden from the insane asylum to get me."

Leaving him to ruminate over her last speech, she climbed the stairs to the indefinite upper regions known as hall bedrooms.

Binkerman was now genuinely set on regaining possession of Brunehilde. He found that he clung desperately to his associations, and Brunehilde seemed someway nearer to Katy. But what if the lady refused to sell her? Impossible. He would offer more money. He got out his wallet and counted his cash. Only fifty dollars and a ticket to Europe! He had forgotten the charter fee for his private circumnavigation of the Statue of Liberty. Well, maybe, because of the trouble with the boarding-house keeper, she would be willing to part with the pet at the same price she had bought it.

The door opened and a young lady came in. On the threshold she paused, startled. Not so with a small black shadow that sat on her shoulder. It detached itself from its perch and flew to the man, uttering cries of joyful welcome.

"My dear madam," began Binkerman formally, "I have come to ask you—"

"Karl Binkerman!"

"What," he exclaimed, "you know me—who is it?"

He walked excitedly to where she stood with her hand on the door and looked at her closely.

"Why, it's Katy."

They stood regarding one another curiously for a moment.

"I thought you had gone," she faltered at length.

"They wouldn't take me," he explained. "My eyes were no good."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" she exclaimed and then stopped in embarrassment.

"I mean I'm sorry."

He took her hand gently. "I'm not, because just to-day I find me out something I never knew about before."

"What is it?" she questioned.

He regarded her fondly, with a teasing twinkle in his eye. "I find out that boarding-house landladies do not care much about monkeys."

"Oh!"—this in disappointment. "Then she told you."

"Yes."

"The cat!"

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to move."

"But supposing some other landladies

don't like monkeys any better than this one, what then? Besides, you haven't any money."

"Yes, I have," she began.

"Tchk, tchk," he clicked with his tongue against his teeth in a way that she had often heard him warn animals not to do something.

She found herself obeying his signal.

"How did you know I didn't have any money?"

"Because you spent it all for Brune-hilde. The man at Kettler's told me. Katy, you must be more economical in the future. There are lots of pets which would be cheaper and just as durable. Because you have spent your last cent for a no-account monkey, you have no place to go except out in the street, unless you do as I tell you."

She looked at him questioningly. This was not like Karl Binkerman, she thought, to try to dictate terms to anyone who was in trouble.

"Well?" she asked finally.

"The only thing you can do is to take care of Brunehilde and me both. In my little flat you can keep a giraffe for a pet if you want to."

He folded her firmly and methodically in his arms. She pushed away from him.

"Is this a proposal?"

"Why, yes."

PRESENTLY she looked up from his shoulder, where she was crying her troubles away.

"Karl, give me back my letter."

"Never," he declared firmly.

"You've read it?" Her face was the picture of dismay.

"Sure, if I hadn't, I never would have known what it was I wanted."

"But, Karl, are you sure you want me?"

"Sure."

"Sure?" she teased. "I may not be as nice as you think. Remember, your eyesight isn't very good."

"Eyesight has nothing to do with it," he assured her soberly. "No matter if I should be blind, I should always see you, Katy, with the eyes of my heart."

A little later Katy looked up and said, "What is Brunehilde pulling your hair for and making so much noise about?"

"Oh, nothing much. She wants me to kiss her too, but I wouldn't do it."

A WONDER TALE OF LOVE

JAMES FRANCIS DWYER, author of those fascinating stories "The White Tentacles," "The Blind Dog of El Corib," "The Tear from Buddha's Eyes," and "The Golden Woman of Keltan," has written for the next—the June—issue of *The Red Book Magazine*, the story of Peter Sherman Sheridan, chief gunner's mate of the U. S. S. *Paducah*, and the three winds—the Golden Wind of Luck, the Rose-pink Wind of Love, and the Black Wind of Misfortune. It is a wonder story of love. Be sure to read

"THE ROSE-PINK WIND OF LOVE"

By James Francis Dwyer

In the June issue of *THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE*, on the news-stands May 22nd.

Humanizing Mr. Winsby

A TWO-PART STORY—PART II

IN the first half of this story we learned that at thirty-two, Mr. Horace G. Winsby was the Sugar-beet King of the San Geronimo Valley. He loved Miss Patricia O'Grady, but in ordinary affairs possessed as much sentiment as a cold hot-water bag; business was his law, his life and his religion, so Miss O'Grady frowned upon him. Mr. Winsby gave tariff-tinkering as his apology, closed his beet-sugar factories, and began gleefully to foreclose on San Geronimo's crop-rotting farms—until one Italian blew off the top of Mr. Winsby's neat derby hat with buckshot. Whereupon Mr. Winsby sought New York on a vacation jaunt. He was robbed of negotiable ways and means, and, as a dramatic climax, was marched out into the streets—he, Horace G. Winsby, the richest man in San Geronimo, with some seventy-five cents in cash, by a hotel staff genially convinced he was a crook.

By Peter B. Kyne

Author of "Sauce for the Gander," "Art for Art's Sake," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

FOR an hour Horace G. Winsby, in blissful ignorance of the calamity that overhung him, found surcease from the world's annoyance in watching the life of Broadway from Thirty-fifth Street to Forty-second, and back again. When his cigar was finished, he decided he might as well be abed as alone in the midst of millions, so he turned toward the hostelry to which he had been recommended—the Mills Hotel.

It was an imposing-looking ten-story building, with an entrance on a level with the street. A long lobby ran straight back. On each side of this Mr. Winsby observed a huge lounging room, filled with hundreds of plain oaken arm-chairs. Every arm-chair held a man, the majority of whom sat staring dumbly ahead. It was a polyglot company—well dressed men, innocent of jewelry, seated side by side with laborers; and noting this, Mr. Winsby felt vastly re-

lieved. In such mixed company his tailor's art would not render him conspicuous.

In the lobby he beheld two little cubby-holes of ticket offices, similar to those in front of cheap motion-picture theaters, one of which bore the caption: "East," and the other "West." Direction was of no consequence to Mr. Winsby, so he approached the Western box-office and intimated his intention of spending the night in the house. The young man in charge swept in the fifty-cent-piece the sugar-beet king laid on the rubber coin-mat and presented him with a key, twenty cents change and a ticket which bore the number "West 982" and had two coupons attached. Desiring to appear bouyant of spirit and to demonstrate his unfamiliarity with thirty-cent lodging houses, Mr. Winsby asked if he was to call up that number! Evidently this was an ancient joke to which the room clerk was subjected hundreds of times

nightly, for he bent upon the sugar-beet king a frightful look of hate and said distinctly: "Room 982 in the west wing. The coupon entitles you to a shower-bath in the basement in the morning and the privilege of washing your linen there. You dry it on the big electric heater. Large lavatories on each floor. You can shave there. Pass on, please."

Thoroughly squelched, Mr. Winsby entered the elevator, and alighted at the ninth floor, where a hall attendant indicated his room. It was a better room than Mr. Winsby had expected to get for thirty cents. Of unfinished concrete, with rounded corners, and in size approximately eight feet long by four feet wide, with a narrow cot, it really resembled a prison cell, save that it was immaculately clean and sweet-smelling. Mr. Winsby locked his door, undressed and hopped into bed in his shirt-tail, in lieu of the silk pajamas commandeered by the enemy. He felt a little queer for a few minutes, but the bed linen had the feel and the freshness of having just come from the laundry, and so presently he fell asleep.

For the king of the San Geronimo was not worried. In the morning he would have coffee and rolls, and by noon at the latest the funds wired by Cattermole would arrive, whereupon he would pay his hotel bill, abuse everybody roundly and move elsewhere. After all, he was really extracting a modicum of enjoyment from his predicament, for it savored of the adventurous—and an adventure was something which Mr. Winsby had not known.

He was awakened next morning by a prodigious hubbub in the hall. His first thought was that somebody was being "chivareed," but presently, from the sounds, he made out that two men, one on each side of the long hall, were hurrying along, thumping the door of each room as they passed. These doors, being steel, but varnished and grained to simulate wood, gave forth a frightful detonation as the sticks in the hands of the reveille squad fell upon the panels.

Mr. Winsby sprang out of bed, consulted the framed notice on his door and discovered that all guests were awakened at six forty-five and must be out of their

rooms by seven. He dressed leisurely, and in the communal lavatory on his floor he made his morning ablutions. He missed his bath, but the thought of taking a shower in the basement in company with hundreds of other men was too repellent, and he decided to await the receipt of the money from home. As he walked to the elevator he could see attendants snatching the linen off beds and hosing down the concrete rooms, making them sweet and clean for the next night's guests.

In the lobby a man approached him. "Did you use your bath ticket?" he queried. "I didn't have the price of a room, but I could use a bath, my friend."

Mr. Winsby handed him the coupon and passed out into the sunshine. He found a clean little restaurant, where he had a modest breakfast for twenty cents. With his remaining twenty-five cents he purchased a packet of cigarettes and went for a stroll in Central Park. He rested there an hour and then walked down-town again.

At twelve-thirty, when he stepped up to the desk at his hotel and politely queried for mail, the clerk handed him a telegram. He opened it and extracted the telegram he had written Cattermole the night before, only in addition to his own bold chirography it now bore the notation in a feminine hand:

Sorry, but the hotel declines to guarantee the tolls on your telegram, and the rules of the company do not permit me to send messages collect unless I guarantee them myself.

OPERATOR.

WE have already stated that Mr.

Winsby was courageous. He demonstrated his courage now by whistling long and softly, after which he sat down in the lobby and for the space of five minutes gave himself up to a profound study of the situation. And at the end of that period he was as wise as when he had sat down. For the king of the San Geronimo, worth three millions if he was worth a cent, was alone in New York, without money, without friends, without credit—yes, by Jupiter, and without luncheon. Also, for the life of him, he couldn't remember the name of

the New York bank upon which the draft for a thousand dollars he had purchased in San Geronimo and which had been stolen from him, had been drawn.

The thought of losing that thousand dollars, merely because he did not possess the funds or the credit for a telegram to the San Geronimo bank, requesting them to wire their New York correspondent to stop payment, hurt Mr. Winsby more than the knowledge of his unpleasant economic condition. He reviled himself bitterly for not being an officer of the commercial bank in San Geronimo, in which event his signature would be on file with the bank's New York correspondent. He would then be more in touch with the bank's affairs and would doubtless remember the name of the New York correspondent, walk down there, be identified by his signature and card, cash a draft for a couple of hundred and be happy. He hated himself for being president of a country savings bank with no outside connections.

Try as he would, Mr. Winsby could think of no way out of his predicament. His sole salvation lay in communicating with Cattermole, but before communicating with Cattermole he had to have a dollar, and to get that dollar he must either earn it, borrow it or beg it. Borrowing or begging was out of the question, and earning almost so, for a man cannot work without food, and pay-day comes but once a week. Moreover, a man may very easily starve to death while seeking a job in New York.

MR. WINSBY finally concluded that there was but one road which he could travel with dignity. He must starve for four or five days, walk the streets by night and sleep on a bench in the park by day—this while a letter to Cattermole should be traveling from New York to San Geronimo.

He took a little morocco-bound memorandum book from his vest pocket and searched through it carefully for a two-cent stamp he had reason to believe was there. He was wrong. It was a one-cent stamp. He might have smothered his pride and asked the hotel clerk for a mate to it, but it is hard for a king to

subvert his regal pride, and Mr. Winsby hated, with a consuming hatred, every man behind that desk. He rose, choking with rage, and walked up Broadway to Bryant Park, where he found a vacant bench and sat down to mourn.

"What in heaven's name shall I do?" he asked himself over and over as the afternoon waned and the sun dipped lower and lower toward the Jersey hills. But heaven, for some perverse reason, appeared to be in an uncommunicative mood. Mr. Winsby bowed his head in his hands and gritted his teeth in impotent rage and despair.

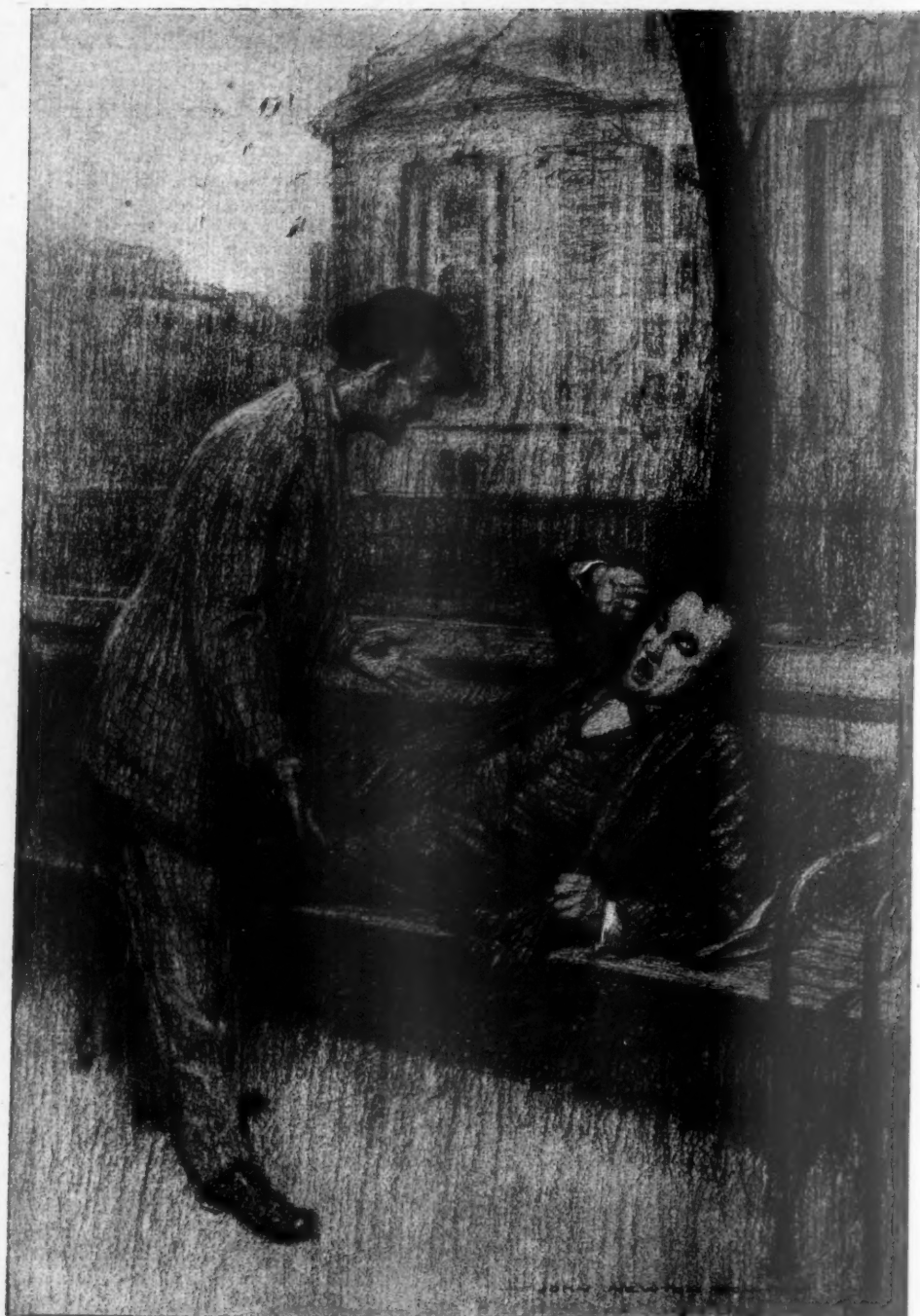
A man slouched up and sat down beside him, but Mr. Winsby did not look up. His neighbor coughed propitiously several times and finally, gathering courage, he addressed the King of the San Geronimo.

"Mister," he said, "yuh haven't got a cigarette, have yuh?"

Mr. Winsby looked up and beheld a little man who might have been anywhere from thirty to sixty years of age. He had rather a bird-like countenance, with bright little black eyes, a sallow complexion and well worn raiment of the kind Mr. Winsby would have described as "noisy." But his tones were friendly and his eyes held the look of a dog that has been beaten but desires to make friends with the one who has beaten him.

Mr. Winsby, as we have remarked heretofore, was not charitable in money matters, but he *was* sport enough to share his cigarettes with his fellow man. He passed over what remained of the box he had purchased that morning; the little man helped himself to one and nodded his thanks. Mr. Winsby seldom smoked cigarettes. Cigars were his choice of tobacco. So few cigarettes did he smoke, in fact, that he had never owned a silver or gold cigarette case. He wished now he had acquired this vice in his youth, for the chances were he would now be enabled to pawn his cigarette case and thus finance a telegram to Cattermole.

"I t'ought at first you were broke like meself," the little man said, as he puffed luxuriously, "but I guess yuh aint or yuh wouldn't be payin' two an' a half cents apiece for smokes."



Mr. Winsby was awakened by the Pronto Kid.

Of a sudden Mr. Winsby thrilled with a passionate longing to tell his trouble to somebody. He yearned for sympathy, a commodity he would doubtless obtain from this stranger who acknowledged bankruptcy so blithely. He smiled at the little man.

"I spent my last twenty-five cents for those cigarettes," he acknowledged. "Your first assumption was quite correct. I'm stony broke—for the time being."

"Expectin' to raise de wind, eh?" his neighbor said politely.

"I'd raise a hundred thousand of it if I knew a soul in this abominable city and could borrow a dollar to send a telegram to California."

The little man cocked his head on one side and inclined an ear to catch this hopeful tale. "Dat listens well," he said kindly. "Go on wit' de rest o' de story, pal."

Mr. Winsby needed no encouragement to proceed. Briefly he sketched the tale of his adventures from the day he had left San Geronimo until the moment the little man had asked him for the cigarettes. As he finished, a knowing smile stole over the face of his auditor.

"I could tell by lookin' at yuh, pal, dat dis was your first time in de park. Aint yuh got nottin' to hock?"

"All of my hockable assets have been stolen or repose in the storeroom at my hotel," Mr. Winsby replied drearily. "I'll be hanged if I know what I'm going to do."

"If yuh was busted as often as I've been, yuh'd know what to do," the little man retorted. "Did yuh have breakfast?"

"Yes—but no luncheon. And I've been sitting here striving to adjust my point of view to dispensing with dinner."

The little man smiled again—a smile of mingled prescience and pathos. "An' yuh was never hungry in your life before?" he queried.

Mr. Winsby laughed bitterly. "Hungry!" he retorted. "I should say not. Why, man, I'm worth five million dollars if I'm worth a cent. Back where I come from, they call me the sugar-beet king of San Geronimo. I have a ten-thousand-acre ranch. I'm the president

of a savings bank; I have two hundred men working for me in various capacities—and here I am, stranded in this Babylon and starving for a single miserable dollar. My name is Winsby," he concluded in a sudden, insane burst of confidence, "Horace G. Winsby, of San Geronimo, California. What is your name?"

"I'm the Pronto Kid," the little man replied mildly, "an' I aint got no million dollars, but I was a king meself onct. That was a long time ago. I was a premier jockey, an' de public used to call me de king of de turf. I was just a crazy kid, an' I got trainin' wit' a bunch o' sure t'ing gamblers. I didn't know enough to play square wit' de public, an' so de stewards got me. Served me right, yer majesty; I aint got no kick comin'."

"I wish I knew where I could acquire the price of a telegram, dinner and a room," Mr. Winsby declared mournfully.

"I aint scoffed not'in but dis cigarette in forty-eight hours. If I put yer hep where yer can feed an' sleep, what do I git out of it?"

Strange to relate, Mr. Winsby did not consider this proposal the height of presumption. "That's business," he said quickly. "You get half of what I get—of course."

"Fair enough, yer majesty," replied the Pronto Kid. "What's de matter wit' soakin' dem cuff links?"

"Well, I declare! I never thought of that," the sugar-beet king replied. He removed the links and handed them to the Pronto Kid. "Lead on," he said, and the Pronto Kid led him to a pawnshop in Sixth Avenue. Mr. Winsby's cuff links were small, plain and of solid gold, with his monogram engraved upon them, which latter greatly reduced their hockable value, but the pawnbroker concluded there might be a sentimental value attached to them by Mr. Winsby, so he was prevailed upon to advance the sum of seventy-five cents. After procuring the seventy-five cents, Mr. Winsby, in a rage, abused the pawnbroker fearfully.

"Cut out de rough stuff, King," warned the Pronto Kid, "an' let's me an' you scoff somethin'."

He led Mr. Winsby to a cheap restaurant, where they each partook of a plate of stew, bread and a cup of coffee for twenty cents each. It was revolting food, and hungry as he was Mr. Winsby could not finish his ration—seeing which, the Pronto Kid finished it for him, and, like *Oliver Twist*, wished he had more.

In the restaurant the Pronto Kid found two newspapers which he carefully folded and slipped under his vest while the proprietor's back was turned. Mr. Winsby, noting they were the same edition of the *Times*, wondered why his companion took both, and finally concluded that the Pronto Kid destined a copy for each of them.

ON the sidewalk outside the restaurant he faced the Pronto Kid inquiringly. Ordinarily he would not have been seen in such company, but the democracy of despair drew him toward the little man, to whose happy suggestion anent the cuff links he was at least indebted for a bluff at eating dinner. The Pronto Kid read the query in Mr. Winsby's eyes.

"We'll tent on de old camp grounds," he said carelessly, and together they returned to Bryant Park. Here the Pronto Kid proceeded to unbosom himself of the wisdom gleaned from his life-long battle with misery and poverty. He warned Mr. Winsby for instance, that the police drive one out of Central Park after dark, and that the only two spots in all the city where a man may sleep unmolested are Bryant Park and the Battery. Also he presented Mr. Winsby with one copy of the *Times* and instructed him in the gentle art of wearing the same around his body under his vest, while sleeping on a park bench at night—it was really remarkable how a newspaper would keep out the cold!

Somewhere in the city a clock was booming the hour of seven as Mr. Winsby and the Pronto Kid selected a bench and pre-empted it for the night, by the simple process of stretching out upon it full length. Lying here, head on elbow and each facing the other, they talked until about nine o'clock, when the Kid's head began to nod, and presently he fell asleep.

Mr. Winsby, however, could not sleep.

Not because of the cold, for it was a perfect Indian summer night, but because he was a stranger in a strange land and what he saw around him interested him profoundly. On a bench across the way a young, well-dressed man retired for the night, first removing his shoes. He fell asleep promptly, but snored and gritted his teeth in a most irritating manner. As the night wore on, one by one the outcasts of the great city crept into the park. There was the subdued scuffle of lagging footsteps along the gravel walks, the muttered curse at the failure to find an unoccupied bench, thus forcing the late arrival to the grass already moist with dew, an occasional sob, a sigh, the incoherent chattering of a drug fiend, the deep diapason of sleeping men—and women.

Mr. Winsby wondered why New York didn't have institutions where such human flotsam and jetsam could be housed. He left his bench and fled across the park. He found an old scrub-woman crying softly to herself. She told him her story without waiting for him to ask. She had earned fourteen dollars a month in a hotel and had just been discharged because she was too weak to scrub floors as floors should be scrubbed.

Mr. Winsby had a sudden inspiration. It brought the hot flush of shame to his unshaven cheek, but he was a stranger in this city and nobody would ever know, so he resolved to put his fortune to the touch.

"If you will loan me one dollar, my dear lady, to-morrow morning you shall be repaid with interest," he said with all the dignity at his command. "For one dollar to-night—the price of a telegram to my office in California, I will give you one thousand dollars at noon to-morrow."

Despite her sorrow, she could not repress a smile. "Bad luck to ye, ye dirrty blackguard," she replied, "that 'd thry to borry a dollar from a poor auld woman on the strength av a lie like that. Go 'way, ye scut."

He went away, consumed with shame for himself and pity for her. Fortune had knocked on her door, as it were, and she had not known. He left the park and went over into Broadway again, where he

sought the writing room of a fashionable hotel and wrote a letter to Cattermole, purchased one two-cent stamp and one special delivery stamp, and mailed his letter. He sat in a soft chair in the lobby and slept for an hour before the house detective forced him to leave.

He returned to Bryant Park in time to witness a tragedy. The young man who had removed his shoes before retiring had awakened to find them gone, and he was prancing around on the grass, cursing and weeping at his frightful predicament. To be alone, friendless and penniless in New York was bad enough, but Mr. Winsby thanked his lucky stars he wasn't compelled to face the world next morning in his stocking feet. While the young man went peering around among the sleepers in a vain quest for his shoes, the sugar-beet king pre-empted his bench. About two o'clock he managed to fall asleep.

He was awakened by the Pronto Kid. The sun was peering over the serrated skyline to the east; the park was half emptied of the sleepers of the night before, and there was an aching void in the midst of the Winsby being. He tried to grin at the Pronto Kid and made a failure of it. But the Pronto Kid knew him to be the possessor of breakfast money, and the smile he bent upon Mr. Winsby, while wistful and pathetic, was a decided success.

"Yer Majesty," he said, "yer bawth is ready." He preceded Mr. Winsby to an adjacent stand-pipe and turned on the faucet. The king removed his collar and tie, wet his handkerchief and washed himself. He was at a loss for a towel until the Pronto Kid suggested a newspaper, as being better than nothing. Mr. Winsby agreed with him and combed his hair with his fingers while his companion washed.

"Well, I suppose we eat a little breakfast, eh?" said the Pronto Kid, presently.

"I spent twelve cents for postage stamps last night," Mr. Winsby confessed. "That leaves twenty-three cents to eat breakfast on."

"Not very much for two, but I guess we c'n make de raffle, yer Majesty," the Pronto Kid replied, and guided Mr.

Winsby to a little eating place on Seventh Avenue near Thirty-sixth Street. Over the door a faded sign bore the single word, "Ike's," and behind a counter, with tall stools in front of it, stood the venerable Ike himself, ancient, bearded, unclean. He was proprietor, chef, dishwasher and waiter combined. As Mr. Winsby and his guide slipped onto the stools, Ike drew two cups of a muddy foreign substance that resembled coffee, and set them before his guests. Beside each cup he placed two cigarettes and said rapidly: "Rollsrusksordoughnuts."

"Rolls," said Mr. Winsby. "Sinkers," said the Pronto Kid, and added, sotto voce to Mr. Winsby, "Sinkers is best. They're heavier an' stay wit' yer longer."

"Ten cents," Ike announced, and Mr. Winsby, with a sigh, laid a dime on the counter. For the first time in his life he was learning that there is such an institution as a five-cent breakfast; for the first time he was eating one and enjoying it. Coffee, two cents; rolls, two cents; cigarettes, one cent! Total, five cents! Mr. Winsby did not care for cigarettes at two for a cent, and the Pronto Kid evidently guessed as much, for without a word he appropriated his host's two cigarettes.

After breakfast, the Kid announced that he was going to get on the trail of some kind of job and invited Mr. Winsby to accompany him. The latter declined, however, so the Pronto Kid suggested that his partner might find it easier to pass the time in the lounging room of the Mills Hotel. "Yer own kind of people," he suggested.

SO Mr. Winsby, acting upon this sage advice, spent the day in the lounging room at the thirty-cent hotel, where he got into conversation with a nice old man, evidently a former head clerk or bookkeeper in a brokerage house. Apparently this individual suspected Mr. Winsby of having money, for at one o'clock he suddenly confided the fact that he had eaten nothing in twenty-four hours and wanted to know if Mr. Winsby would oblige him with a temporary loan of fifty cents. As security for the loan he offered a sheet of mining-stock certificates which he alleged to be worth in the

neighborhood of one hundred thousand dollars. His manner, as he made this request, was so gentle, so abject, so apologetic and hopeful, that a lump rose in Mr. Winsby's throat.

"Poor old duffer," he soliloquized, "poor old duffer! Down and out at last, cleaned of the savings of a lifetime by a mining-stock swindler, and a little soft upstairs." Aloud he said: "My dear friend, I thank you for the compliment, but I haven't any fifty cents. I'm as hungry as you are."

About five o'clock the Pronto Kid came in and sat down wearily beside him. He had not found his job, and he was weak and famished.

"We have ten cents in the treasury," said Mr. Winsby. "If you can stand Ike's again, I can."

The Pronto Kid looked at him curiously. Mr. Winsby interpreted that look, which said as plainly as if he had spoken the words: "Why, I never imagined you'd skip lunch and wait for a man you'd only met once before." Aloud the Pronto Kid said: "King, you're all right. Let's scoff."

So they visited Ike and spent ten cents for dinner and the remaining three cents for cigarettes, after which they returned to the hotel lounging room and sat there talking until they were turned out at midnight. During that exchange of mutual confidences Mr. Winsby learned that the Pronto Kid was a married man; that his wife, who was sickly, worked in a cigarette factory somewhere on the East Side; that they had once had a baby; that the Pronto Kid was a "swipe" around riding academies when he could get a job; that he had lost a job eight months previous to his meeting with Mr. Winsby and had been unable to find another of any nature whatsoever; that his wife had procured work in a cigarette factory and supported the family; that the baby was cared for in a day nursery; that the inability of the Pronto Kid to support his little family himself had well nigh broken his heart; that his pride had forbade his sponging off the meager earnings of his wife; and that to avoid this, he had taken to the streets. Somebody had spoken to him of the Municipal Lodging House, and he had patron-

ized it three nights in succession, in ignorance of the law which stipulates that the third visit shall be regarded as *prima facie* evidence of vagrancy. Accordingly Pronto Kid had been "vagged" and sent to Blackwell's Island for six months—and when he came back the baby was dead.

In meticulous detail he described the baby to Mr. Winsby. He dwelt lovingly on the infant's affection for him, the Pronto Kid, and his voice grew husky and a sob choked him as he described the blotting out of that poor little life one hot night on the roof of the tenement where his wife rented a room.

It was obvious to Mr. Winsby that as men are rated in society the Pronto Kid, poor devil, was far from being high-class. The sugar-beet king gathered that the little man had been a tout, a taxicab driver and perhaps a thief, but when he spoke of his wife and the baby that was gone, something whispered to Mr. Winsby that tucked away in that starved, unhappy human entity there was a streak of something pure.

Mr. Winsby didn't know just what it was, but nevertheless he felt certain it was there, and a great desire came over him to comfort the Pronto Kid. He ventured to speak once more of his wealth, of his ten thousand acres in the San Geronimo and his title as sugar-beet king.

The Pronto Kid nodded dully and glanced at Mr. Winsby out of the tail of his eye.

"You poor nut," he soliloquized pityingly. "Sugar-beet king is *good*! I wonder when dey let yuh out o' Matteawan, an' if dey put yuh in for talkin' like ready money. Outside o' dat, you're what I'd call a pretty sensible kind of a feller."

"I maintain a very fine stable," Mr. Winsby continued, "and I could use an expert horseman like you, Pronto. You wait until my manager sends me the money I've written him for, and we'll just go down to that cigarette factory—"

"In a limousine?" queried the Kid, pretending an interest.

"The finest in this whole cold-hearted, suspicious city, Pronto. And we'll carry that little wife of yours up to Fifth Ave-

nue and buy you and her some nice clothes and a pair of tickets to San Geronimo—"

The Pronto Kid laid his hand affectionately on Mr. Winsby's arm. "King," he said wistfully, "you're an awful good scout, an' if you ever come into your kingdom I'll bet you'd be a ring-tail all right, all right. But let's not talk about it just now, Yer Majesty. I went down an' seen Emmeline to-day, Yer Highness, an' I aint happy to-night somehow."

"Is she ill?" Mr. Winsby queried.

"Con," the Pronto Kid replied dully. "She says it's just a cold, but I've seen too many people wit' colds like dat."

"You poor devil!" mused Mr. Winsby.

"You dear ol' sack o' nuts!" mused the Pronto Kid.

THEY slept that night in Bryant Park.

They starved next day, for the Pronto Kid was too weak to go hunting for a job and preferred to sit on a bench in the sunshine. Having nothing else to do, Mr. Winsby sat with him and talked. They grew confidential. A week before, Mr. Winsby would no more have opened his heart of its secret longings, aspirations, and loneliness than he would have believed himself a candidate for starvation. He confided to the Pronto Kid the story of his wooing and rejection by Patricia O'Grady. He described her to the Kid, who was keenly interested in the tale.

"Yuh say she kin ride, King?" he queried.

"Like the devil himself, Pronto. She owns some fine animals, too, and breaks all her own colts."

"An' she trun yuh down?" the Kid persisted.

Mr. Winsby nodded. So did the Pronto Kid. "Now I've got at de bottom o' dis business," the latter soliloquized. "Dis Patsy girl t'rows de ol' sugar-beet king in de air, an' when he comes down he 's batty in de belfry. I tink de sucker's lonesome."

MR. WINSBY felt weak and light-headed when he awoke next morning, and he had hunger pains. The Pronto Kid was shaking him.

"Come," he said, "we're goin' to have breakfast, Yer Majesty."

"On what?" Mr. Winsby queried.

The Pronto Kid held up a half dollar and grinned.

"Where did you get that money?" Mr. Winsby demanded suspiciously.

"Yer Majesty," said the little man, passing his arm around Horace G Winsby, "after we turned in last night, I get a hunch I can dig up the price o' breakfast, so I mopes away, leavin' you sleepin', an' hits a Greek in an all-night restaurant on Seventh Avenue for a dish-washin' job. He gimme it. I wash dishes six hours for dis money, King, but I didn't git nottin' to eat on de side. All dey let a feller have free is a cup o' coffee."

"Pronto, you're a little brick," Mr. Winsby declared, and together they made a judicious choice of restaurant and spent the entire fifty cents in riotous living. They had no more to eat that day, but in the evening of the next day the Pronto Kid suddenly sprang up from his bench in Bryant Park.

"Dere goes a guy wot owes me money," he said, and darted away after a well-dressed citizen. He overtook him, conversed for a few moments and returned to Mr. Winsby with ten cents. He was quite excited.

"Me friend gimme dis dime," he said. "It was all de small change he had on him. All de rest of his money is in hundred-dollar bills, but he's goin' to take me out to dinner an' t'row a big feed into me, crack one o' dem centuries an' pay me de ten bucks he's owed me fer two years. You better trot around to Ike's, Yer Majesty, an' buy a double dose, an' I'll meet yer over in de lobby o' de Mills after I come from dinner. Den we'll dine."

"By George, Pronto, you are a brick," Mr. Winsby declared. He took the dime without the slightest hesitation and departed, but not for Ike's. A few doors below Ike's he had seen beef stew advertised—and he wanted something filling. For ten cents he was enabled to purchase a large plateful of heavy, greasy stew, almost of the consistency of pudding, together with a generous slice of bread.

THE Pronto Kid had told him he would meet him in the lobby of the Mills, but for some reason Mr. Winsby preferred the cleaner atmosphere of the park, during the two-hour wait that must intervene before the Kid and his wealthy friend should finish dinner. Accordingly he bent his steps parkward and sought his favorite seat.

Suddenly he halted. Seated on a bench, his elbows on his knees, his pinched face in his hands and his body bowed in an attitude of intense dejection, sat the Pronto Kid; and in that instant Mr. Winsby's cold heart thrilled as it had never thrilled before; a mist came into his eyes and his lips quivered with emotion. He understood now. He approached the Pronto Kid and touched him on the shoulder. The little man looked up and smiled wanly.

"Pronto, old man," said Mr. Winsby, "why did you do that?"

"Do what?"

"Beg that dime from a stranger, give it to me to buy dinner with, tell me that dear, kind, generous lie about going out to dinner and meeting me at the Mills afterward, just so you could get rid of me and prevent me from ascertaining that you starved, that I might eat. Will you tell me why you did that for me, Pronto? You met me less than a week ago; I never did you a kindness, and it was not up to you to make such a sacrifice for a stranger. I don't understand it."

"Well, yer see, Yer Majesty," the Pronto Kid explained humbly, "it's dis way: You aint used to dis, an' I am. You're a gentleman, pal, an' me,"—he laughed shortly,—"I been starved all me life, seems 'most, an' I don't mind. Forty-eight to sixty hours wit'out me grub aint nottin' to me, King. Honest, it aint. Besides, aint me an' you pals?" He smiled wanly and with all the tolerance of a father humoring a sick child.

"I believe you like me," said Mr. Winsby wonderingly.

"Sure Mike! Didn't yer split yer cuff links wit' me, Yer Highness?"

Tears—the first that had dimmed the Winsby eyes since his father died—rolled silently down the sugar-beet king's

cheeks. He was deeply touched. He had been suffering, and perhaps his heart was softened, but his head was not. He knew now that there existed in this world something he had never practiced, something he had always regarded as more or less of a myth, like the story of Adam and Eve, and that something was friendship and loyalty and charity and human love and sympathy.

He sat down by the Pronto Kid and drew an arm across the outcast's thin shoulders. "You don't believe I'm a sugar-beet king, do you, Kid?" he said. "Well, I'm not—"

"Wot t'ell," said the Pronto Kid carelessly, and flapped a thin hand to dismiss the subject.

"I'm a modern *Caliph Haroun Al Raschid*," Mr. Winsby continued. "Did you ever hear of the old gentleman?"

"No, Yer Majesty."

"Well, he was worth all kinds of money, Pronto, and at night he used to disguise himself and prow around among his subjects. He'd be a plain citizen for a night, and do what he could to help folks out, and then he'd go home, sleep the forenoon away and be a caliph again until bed-time."

"Some caliph," murmured the little man. "I wisht I had a smoke."

An hour later, when he was assured that the Pronto Kid slept, Mr. Winsby arose from his hard couch and stole out of Bryant Square. And after applying at various restaurants along Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Avenues for a night's work washing dishes, he was finally fortunate enough to be put to work in a greasy little coffee house on Eighth Avenue between Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Streets. Two Greeks owned it, and they smiled to each other as Mr. Winsby removed his coat and vest, hung them on a nail behind the kitchen door, tied a gunny sack in front of him to protect his trousers, and drove his arms into the greasy, ill-smelling water in that greasy, ill-smelling galvanized iron wash-bin. What Mr. Winsby didn't know about dish-washing would have filled a book, but he learned volumes about it before six o'clock next morning. Before leaving, one of the Greek partners invited him to

eat breakfast. He had ham and eggs, hot cakes and coffee, and felt like saying grace when he had finished his meal, and with a fifty-cent-piece in his pocket, set out for Bryant Square to find the Pronto Kid.

He found the Kid dozing on his bench, awakened him and pressed the fifty-cent-piece into his hand. The little man stared at it.

"I washed dishes for it—a dirty job, but the money is clean," Mr. Winsby told him.

"King," said the Pronto Kid sternly, "you oughtn't ter done this. I bet you never washed dishes in yer life before. Dat aint a gentleman's work."

"I ate half of the profits of your dishwashing," Mr. Winsby reminded him. "If I could do that, I'm none too good to wash dishes myself."

The Pronto Kid took the money and disappeared, leaving Mr. Winsby to come slowly to the conclusion that he was a plutocrat no longer. He had been democratized in a bin of filthy dishwater!

MR. WINSBY had carefully computed the time that must elapse before his special delivery letter to Cattermole should be delivered. He had mailed it about eleven o'clock Thursday night. If it left New York early Friday morning, it would be delivered to Cattermole the following Tuesday—probably in the morning, and if Cattermole acted promptly, the money would be waiting for him in the main telegraph office late Tuesday afternoon.

Throughout Monday Mr. Winsby and the Pronto Kid sat on their bench in the park and swapped confidences and reminiscences. In the evening they dined on beef stew at ten cents each, and in the face of vehement protest from Mr. Winsby, who desired to spend the money on cigarettes for the Kid, the latter led the King to a Chinese laundry, where he spent the five cents still in the treasury on the purchase of a clean linen collar for Mr. Winsby. He explained to Mr. Winsby that a man was a fool to pay fifteen cents for a new collar when he could purchase an "uncalled for" collar from a Chinese laundryman for five cents, and Mr. Winsby agreed with him.

That night Mr. Winsby stole out of the park and made the rounds of so many cheap all-night restaurants that by one o'clock his legs warned him he had better return to Bryant Square and get some rest. The Pronto Kid was missing, but he came in presently and lay down beside Mr. Winsby on the *Herald* the latter had spread on the grass for him.

"No luck," he growled.

"Same here," the sugar-beet king replied. "There's a thousand men for every job."

They slept their breakfast Tuesday morning, and the Pronto Kid, having "mooched" two cigarettes, they smoked their luncheon. And after luncheon, while the famished Pronto lay on the grass of the square, Mr. Winsby stole away to the main telegraph office. It was a quarter of three before the money arrived, and when the cashier informed Mr. Winsby of the fact, nothing but the little steel bars of the grilled window prevented Mr. Winsby from leaping in and hugging him.

Ten minutes later, the Pronto Kid was awakened by hearing his name called. He sat up. Close to the curb on Forty-second Street a handsome limousine was standing; from the window of the limousine Horace G. Winsby's pale, unshaven face peered out.

"Pronto," he shouted happily, "I've come into my kingdom again. Hurry, you little old no-good son of a horse-thief. We have business to attend to."

"Yer Majesty!" gasped the bewildered Pronto. "Am I seein' things?"

"You're seeing a sugar-beet king if you never saw one before. Come a-running, Pronto." And Mr. Winsby held open the door. The Pronto Kid approached cautiously, as if doubting the evidence of his eyesight, and as he thrust his head into the limousine, Mr. Winsby struck him over the nose with something. It was a thousand-dollar bill.

"Give it to Emmeline, old man," said Mr. Winsby and dragged his companion in misery into the car. The Pronto Kid looked at the bill, then at Mr. Winsby and back at the bill again.

Suddenly he began to cry, very silently and softly.

HORACE G. WINSBY, greasy, disheveled, unkempt and pale of face, berated the desk of the New York hotel which caters to the select trade from the Far West.

"My name is Horace G. Winsby," he said mildly. "I mention that fact because you may not recognize in the wreck you see before you, the gentleman who had to leave this hotel six days ago because he couldn't pay a trifling bill of ninety-eight dollars. I now desire to make settlement." And with the words he handed the clerk a hundred-dollar bill, picked up a pen and in a trembling hand wrote on the register:

H. G. Winsby, San Geronimo, California.

P. Kid and wife, New York City.

He set down the pen, pocketed his two dollars change and thus addressed the clerk: "I want a suite of three rooms—two of them bedrooms, with private bath and a sitting room in between. I want them sunny and high up—about fifteen or twenty dollars a day, I guess. I'll pay in advance. Have my baggage sent up immediately, and if one of you New York turkey buzzards as much as looks sideways at me while I'm a guest in this hotel, I'll kill him first and ask questions afterward." He turned to the Pronto Kid. "Pronto, my friend," he continued, "I have never before fully realized the blessing of an appetite. Follow the bell-hop upstairs and climb into the bath, while I have speech with the head waiter and frame up a feed. I'll have a bowl of soup delivered to you while you're in the bath—or would you rather have a jolt of red liquor?"

"Soup," the Pronto Kid piped faintly. "Me for soup."

An hour later the King of the San Geronimo and the Pronto Kid dined in their apartments. Arrayed in a suit of Mr. Winsby's pale lavender silk pajamas the Pronto Kid disposed of, by actual computation, six dollars and thirty cents' worth of food, drink and cigars before tired nature asserted herself and he rolled into bed and fell asleep like a tired child. Mr. Winsby waited just long enough to send a night letter to

Cattermole before turning in himself. In the morning he and the Pronto Kid must be in shape to rescue Mrs. Pronto.

MISS PATRICIA O'GRADY dismounted from her brown thoroughbred in front of Horace G. Winsby's office in San Geronimo, gave her reins to a Mexican to hold and entered Winsby's office. Old Mr. Cattermole rose to greet her effusively.

"I've called to see the boss," said Patsy gaily. "I wrote him a letter the day before yesterday, in which I asked him to reconsider the problem of the sugar-beet growers in this valley. I told him I'd call to-day to talk it over with him."

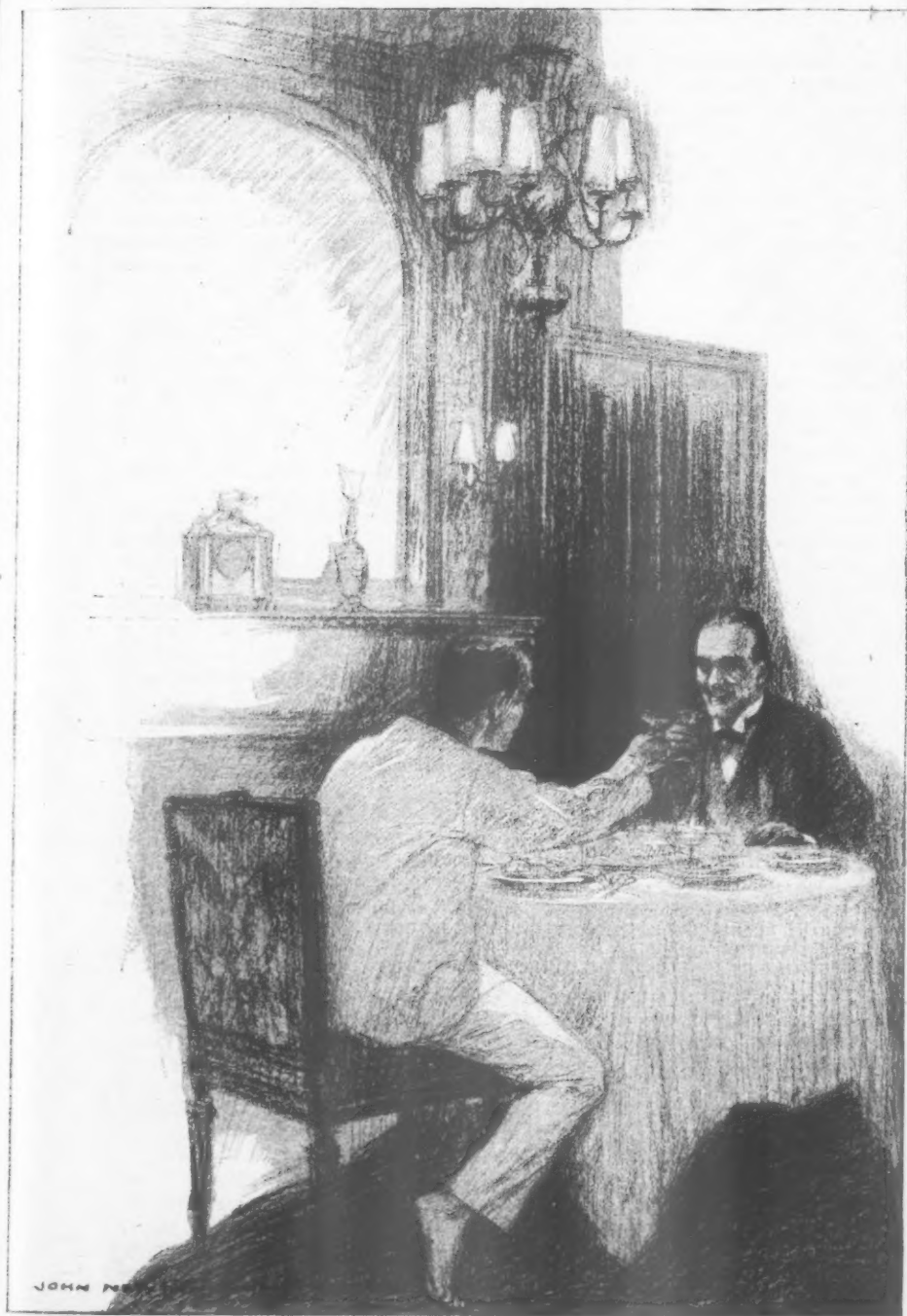
"He never received your letter, Miss Patsy," old Cattermole assured her. "He's been in New York for the past two weeks. I would have forwarded the letter but he wires me he will start west again in a few days. What about this sugar-beet business, Pat?"

Patricia climbed on Mr. Cattermole's tall stool and leaned her elbows on his desk. Her eyes blazed wrathfully.

"I think it's a disgrace—a positive disgrace—the way Mr. Winsby has acted in this entire matter," she declared. "When he established those two sugar factories, he encouraged the small farmers of San Geronimo to specialize in sugar beets. He promised to buy their crops each year at the prevailing prices in other sections. They believed him, and as a result of their coöperation in his enterprise Mr. Winsby had made at least three millions of dollars. That is a fact, is it not, Mr. Cattermole?"

"I'm afraid it is, Patsy," the old man answered.

"And now, just because the new tariff has cut his profits in two, he has, after disposing of his own crop, declined to buy the crops of the poor people dependent upon him. He has left them with their beets on their hands. Nearly all of them have their sugar beets stacked, hoping against hope that Mr. Winsby will change his mind and operate his factories, even at a slight gain, for I do not believe he will lose anything by operating this year, despite the tariff. And in the meantime—"



Arrayed in a suit of Mr. Winsby's pale lavender silk pajamas, the Pronto Kid disposed of, by actual computation, six dollars and thirty cents' worth of food, drink and cigars.

She stamped her foot. "I think it's hateful for a man to oppress those who are poor and dependent upon his strength if they are to survive. Oh, why cannot Mr. Winsby play the game like a sport, even if he loses a couple of hundred thousand dollars. They call him the sugar-beet king in San Geronimo, and I do wish, Mr. Cattermole, he was more worthy of the title. There's nothing kingly about him. How much nobler it would have been if Mr. Winsby had said to the farmers of the San Geronimo: 'I'll buy your sugar beets this year, but you must plan to put in some other crop next year, unless conditions in the sugar market change very materially.'"

"Are you interested in the farmers of the San Geronimo, Patsy, or are you interested to a greater extent in seeing Horace Winsby become a human being?" old Cattermole demanded. He had known her since she was a baby; hence he dared to speak plainly.

"The witness declines to answer," Patricia retorted.

"You might just as well have said 'Yes,' Patsy. I happen to know he asked you to marry him and you declined. I don't blame you. He's as cold at heart as the handle of an ice pitcher, only—well, Patsy, something seems to have warmed our Mr. Winsby up recently. Read that." And he handed the girl a telegram received from Mr. Winsby that morning:

Prepare to run factories all year. Buy all the sugar beets in the San Geronimo at same prices paid last year. Do everything possible make things easy for my friends in the valley. My policy was a mistaken one and very unfair to those who trusted me. Give that angry Italian some money if he needs it and tell him I don't care a hoot if he never pays his mortgage. Apologize to him for me and tell him I'll apologize personally when I get back, which will be in about a week or ten days.

HORACE G. WINSBY.

Patricia O'Grady laid the telegram on the desk and blinked at it, for her tender brown eyes were filled with tears. "I think, Mr. Cattermole," she said presently, and pointed to the telegram, "that

this is the very finest specimen of American literature I have ever read. The man who sent that message was every inch a king."

"I don't understand it, Patsy," old Cattermole declared earnestly. "I think the boss has gone crazy."

Patsy looked at Mr. Cattermole very severely. "Have you begun buying sugar beets, according to instructions?" she demanded.

"Not yet, Patsy."

"Then listen to me, Mr. Cattermole: When Horace G. Winsby comes back to the San Geronimo I'm going to marry him. You wouldn't care to have me use my influence as his wife to have you fired, would you?"

"Good gracious, child! Of course you wouldn't do any such thing—"

"I might—if you fool away the boss' time like this. You have five minutes to call the editor of the *Herald* on the 'phone and tell him to print the royal ukase to the farmers to begin hauling sugar beets to the Winsby factories. I'll carry the glad tidings to the Italian. He lives out on the Chula Vista road." And suddenly Patricia jumped down from the tall stool, kissed old Cattermole, called him an old dear and went back to the Chula Vista rancho.

TEN days later Horace G. Winsby, accompanied by the Pronto Kid and Mrs. Pronto, got off the train at Guadalupe and entered one of Mr. Winsby's big touring cars that was waiting there for the party.

"Yer Majesty," said the Pronto Kid, "is this yer wagon?"

Mr. Winsby nodded.

"Some wagon," replied the Pronto Kid, "some wagon!"

They whirled away up the San Geronimo. It was a day in the early fall, the period of the year when California is loveliest. There had been a slight rain the night before, and to the frail Mrs. Pronto the cool atmosphere, laden with the pungent smell of earth, wet stubbles and the weeds by the roadside, was better than a tonic. When the main valley opened out before them, Mr. Winsby had his chauffeur halt the machine on a little knoll, in order that his

guests might glean a perfect view of his kingdom. North, south and east the hills stretched away in a filmy blue vista, while from the broad, level valley between, the meadow larks loosed their rippling mellow cadences. Borne on a slight breeze the odor of the fragrant *yerba santa* was wafted to them from the hills; from up the valley a cock quail called querulously: "Come right home! Come right home!" Mr. Winsby's heart swelled as his gaze roved once more to his own broad horizons, and in that instant the strain of his Spanish ancestors flared forth triumphant and he was a true Californian at last. He began to brag about the land he loved. He turned to the Prontos, and smiled upon poor, enchanted little Mrs. Pronto.

"This," he said,—and waved his hand toward the broad acres,—“this is mine. I don't own it all, but it's mine just the same. Isn't it wonderful, Pronto, after Bryant Square and the skyscraper skyline beyond? You'll be well in a week, Mrs. P.”

"Some kingdom," murmured the Pronto Kid, "some kingdom!"

AS they neared San Geronimo, the spatter of mud from the flying hooves of a hard-ridden horse attracted the Pronto Kid's attention. He turned in the tonneau, and Patsy O'Grady waved her hand at him in a signal to halt. He called Mr. Winsby's attention to this added touch of beauty in the landscape, and the sugar-beet king ordered the chauffeur to slow up. Patricia reined in alongside.

"Welcome home, Horace," she said.

His heart leaped within him like a newly netted fish! Horace! She had called him Horace! And she had never called him aught but Mr. Winsby before. The light of hope leaped into his eyes—and an instant later he had leaped out of the automobile.

"Drive on, bo," warned the Pronto Kid to the chauffeur, for he was wise in his day and generation. So they drove out of earshot and left Mr. Winsby standing beside the big brown thoroughbred, holding up his hand to Patricia,

"Hello, Patsy dear," he said simply,

and retained possession of her hand, the while he gazed at her steadily. "I've been away, having adventures," he added. "I've had a bully time, too, Patsy."

"It was awfully dear of you to send that telegram to Mr. Cattermole," she said. "I always knew you weren't as hard as people said you were."

"That's where you were dead wrong, my dear. I was. But as I say, I've been having adventures, and—well, Patsy dear, I've been humanized, and God help me, I love you more than ever. Have I a fighting chance? I've been wandering in the dark, sweetheart—been blundering around, you know, and missing all the fun in life—the fun that comes of being a plain human being. Please, Patsy, I need you so. You're so beautiful and good and charitable I—I—"

He paused, overcome. Moreover, he was rather a poor hand at making pretty speeches to a woman. But nevertheless, although he did not know it, he *had* made progress. He had told Patricia he loved her, and she knew he meant it. Also he had told her she was beautiful—and she knew he had been humanized. The Pronto Kids were not looking, and the nearest farmer appeared to be a mile distant; Patricia leaped down from her horse and—

"May I?" he whispered. "I don't deserve this, but—"

He kissed her, and she beamed upon him and rode back the way she had come.

"I'll drive over for tea," yelled Mr. Winsby after her, and she waved her hand in assent. He returned to the automobile, and for the second time in his life he whistled "Turkey in the Straw." His eyes were flaunting his delirious joy to all the world, and Mrs. Pronto nudged her husband.

In his own elegant phraseology, the Pronto Kid was "hep" in an instant. They rode in silence for a mile, while Mr. Winsby whistled; then, unable longer to contain himself, he turned to the Prontos.

"The young lady that hailed us,—Miss O'Grady, you know,—well, she's the future Mrs. Winsby," he exulted.

"Some queen, Yer Majesty, some queen!" breathed the Pronto Kid.

A Complete Résumé of the Opening Chapters of "THE ISLAND OF SURPRISE"

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY gives, in "The Island of Surprise," a fascinating novel of love, adventure and dramatic surprises.

Robert Lovell is the son of Godfrey Lovell, a Wall Street capitalist, and has chosen writing as his life work, rather than a part in any of his father's various enterprises. Dorothy Arden, his father's most confidential secretary, "takes" the dictation of his first novel.

Miss Arden is beautiful and the daughter of a man who went bankrupt in a contest with Godfrey Lovell in "the Street." She has always been secretly interested in Robert Lovell, but has maintained reserve toward him. As the story progresses it becomes apparent that young Lovell is modeling his heroine from her, and his hero from himself. Unconsciously he is making love to her through the pages of the book.

On the day the last of the story is dictated, Miss Arden, swept from her reserve, shows she is in love with the young writer. He believes there is an answering love in his heart. Miss Arden slips on a rug and is stunned by the fall. When she recovers, she is in Lovell's arms, and he is pouring words of love into her ears.

Miss Arden tells Lovell that his father had planned to marry him to Dorothy Cassilis, daughter of the Chicago financier who is his ally. Robert, in a burst of resentment, decides that he and Miss Arden shall be married at once. They hurry to the Little Church Around the Corner, and the ceremony is performed.

They return to the office to find that Godfrey Lovell has suffered a stroke which will necessitate his giving up all business. His physician orders him to take a cruise to the South Seas in his yacht.

ROBERT LOVELL finds he must go to Chicago to complete a deal which Godfrey Lovell and Daniel Cassilis are putting through. He goes reluctantly. Miss Cassilis is not in Chicago, so he does not meet her.

Robert's father joins him in Chicago, en route to San Francisco, to board the yacht, and insists on the son's accompanying him on the cruise. Robert makes a hurried trip to New York to see his wife, but finds she is gone from her apartment. The only clue to her whereabouts is the fragments of a telegram, which, when pieced together, make only

the words: "Can't do without....need you....take first train....meet me."

Young Lovell is stunned. He decides to engage detectives in Chicago, and on his return from the cruise, to find the man who sent that telegram to his wife and settle with him.

ALTHOUGH he smarts under the supposed deception of his wife, he is not so concerned with her that it hinders him from warmly admiring another young woman on his train. A wreck precipitates her into his arms, and he finds her to be Dorothy Cassilis, returning to Chicago to say good-by to her parents before their departure for the Lovell yacht. Lovell changes her mind about going on the cruise, which she had refused to join in order to avoid him, and so they make the trip west in each other's society, enjoying that trip to the utmost.

Reaching San Francisco, they find Dorothy Arden aboard the yacht, as it was Godfrey Lovell's telegram that her young husband had found in her room. Her letters to Robert had been delayed, and now she knows of his lover-like attentions to Dorothy Cassilis. She meets him with scorn; and in her resentment she gives all of her attention to Dr. Elverson, Godfrey Lovell's physician, who openly shows his admiration for her. Lovell is furious and pays devoted court to Dorothy Cassilis.

Miss Arden discovers Lovell and Miss Cassilis on deck one night just as Miss Cassilis is telling Lovell that she loves him. Miss Arden breaks in and demands what relation Lovell and Miss Cassilis bear to each other. Miss Cassilis is insulted, and Lovell discovers he has put himself in a position where he must be shamed in both women's eyes when Miss Cassilis knows of his marriage; and Miss Arden is wretched.

The next day Miss Arden is compelled to chaperon Miss Cassilis and Lovell while they explore a South Sea island. A tempest comes up before the explorers can reach the ship, which puts out to sea for safety. In their rush to try to reach the ship, they fall over a cliff. Lovell suffers a wound on the head. When he regains consciousness Miss Arden has told Miss Cassilis that she is Lovell's wife. Miss Cassilis, thinking it an untruth, retorts that *she* is his wife. Miss Arden appeals to Lovell, and he, dazed with the loss of his memory, tells them he doesn't know either of them.



The Island of Surprise

By Cyrus Townsend Brady

Author of "The Island of Regeneration," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER TITTLE

CHAPTER XV

BY THE WIND-TORN SEA.

HERE is nothing like the outward application of cold water to moderate angry passions inwardly. When the first drops of rain blew into the faces of the two women as they confronted each other under the trees, they instantly and instinctively remembered the helpless man at their feet. With a mingling of horror and shame shared alike, they turned to succor him.

It was Dorothy Arden who spoke first, perhaps because of her training in the practical and everyday duties of life, which had developed her efficiency and stimulated her natural disposition to lead. Dorothy Cassilis' education had tended to make her receive gracefully the services of others; Dorothy Arden's development urged her to do first for others and only incidentally for herself.

"We must get him to some better place of shelter than this," began Dorothy Arden.

"Yes, but where?"

"Watch him until I find out," was the answer with which the taller woman turned away. "There must be some cave,

or niche, in this rock wall. Keep the rain from him as best you can."

Heedless of the torrent, she ran out on the beach and surveyed the expanse of cliff that rose on either hand and seemed to extend around the island. The wall, or rampart of rock, was seamed and worn and eroded by centuries of exposure to wind and weather. A few steps to her right the base of the wall had been torn away, perhaps by some mighty tidal wave of the past. The result was not so much a cave as a deep niche that ran inward in a huge concave. Further along, the wall made a sudden turn so that in one corner, unless the wind shifted at least a hundred and eighty degrees, they would be free from its force and protected from the rain, should it drive ever so fiercely. She ran to it and inspected it quickly. The bottom or floor of the recess was thickly covered with fine, dry sand, warm and yielding. She quickly retraced her steps.

"I have found a place," she said; "we must take him there at once."

"We can't carry him," was the troubled response. "What shall we do?"

Dorothy Arden looked a little contemptuously at her slighter, weaker, younger sister. She herself perhaps

could manage her portion of the burden, but Dorothy Cassilis never. The latter recognized the disdain in the glance, and the reason for it. She flushed under it, but she said nothing, although she bitterly resented the other woman's attitude.

"We'll have to drag him then," said Dorothy Arden. "Fortunately, it is not far. Perhaps I can do it alone. He must be moved."

"You shall not. I claim the right to help."

"Very well; together we can do it quicker."

They realized that their bitter rivalry for the time must be subordinated to Lovell's needs. He had partially returned to consciousness, although there was little intelligence in his half-open eyes. He was rolling his head uneasily as if it pained him. The ground beneath his head was dark and stained. The women each took him by an arm and shoulder, and lifted him up and by great effort managed to drag him through the undergrowth to the beach. In the open they sheltered him as best they could from the rain until they got him into the recess. The thick carpet of sand was still dry and warm in the niche. Indeed, they were so near the equator it was not cold even though it rained. And they were delighted to find that the projection of the side, the heavy overhang and the depth of the recess protected them perfectly. While Dorothy Cassilis held Lovell's head, Dorothy Arden with her hands scooped out a place in the sand nearest the back, where Lovell could lie comfortably.

"Now," said she after he was safely bestowed, "we must do something with that cut on his head. It should be attended to at once."

"What can we do?" asked Dorothy Cassilis helplessly, looking jealously at the other.

Dorothy Arden made a rapid examination of the wound. She knew little about medicine and less about surgery, but she was naturally deft-fingered and capable.

"It's a bad gash," she said. "I don't know whether the skull is fractured or not. If I only had a pair of scissors!"

At Dorothy Cassilis' waist-belt hung a fantastic little bag of leather, a sort of vanity case.

"I have a tiny pair here," she said, opening it and extracting them.

"Hand them to me," cried the other girl.

She cut away the hair for a closer inspection and as she did so directed Dorothy Cassilis to tear enough strips from her underskirt for bandages, and to wet one of them in the rain. With this material, which she supplemented with strips from her own petticoat, Miss Arden washed from the wound the sand that had been ground into it by the fall, applied a wet bandage and then bound the wound up tightly, remarking that the flow of blood seemed to have stopped. Lovell, it appeared, was not unconscious of her ministrations, for when she had finished, he whispered vaguely but distinctly a faint "Thank you."

Her efforts were not yet complete, however, for in the hope that he might have brought some whisky with him, she felt in his hip pocket and discovered a leather covered silver flask. Diluting the whisky with water, she gave him a little to drink. She also poured a few drops on the bandages, just why, she could not tell. With scissors and fingers, Dorothy Arden cut and tore cloth from her dress, folded it up and slipped it under Lovell's head and back as a pillow to keep him from the sand. Dorothy Cassilis helped her in every way possible. Then she rose to her feet and stood looking down at the man. After a time she raised her arms with a gesture of impotence that was almost despairing.

"It is all that we can do," she said more to herself than to the other. "I don't know how seriously he is hurt; I don't know how we will get along, whether he will ever recover or not. We have done our best. Now it is all in God's hands."

She glanced at the other woman as she spoke and was horrified to see her face deadly white, her eyes closed. Dorothy Cassilis took a step, reeled, staggered and would have fallen had not Dorothy Arden caught her quickly and eased her down on the sand, marveling as she did so at the strange working of



Dorothy Arden did not give utterance to any expression of sympathy for, or appreciation of, the other woman; there was too much between them for that: but she went about the work of dressing the wound with businesslike promptitude and care.

fate which made her the support and protector of the woman she so bitterly hated.

"What is the matter?" she asked with a deep note of anxiety in her voice.

Was she to have two helpless people on her hands?

"It's my foot," said Dorothy Cassilis faintly.

And, realizing the situation, for an instant Dorothy Arden could not withhold from the slighter, weaker girl a tribute of admiration for a heroism and endurance for which she had by no means given her credit. Dorothy Cassilis had actually walked on that badly torn foot. Without a murmur she had done her part in bringing Lovell to shelter and caring for him, although every step had been anguish to her. She had not faltered or given way until she had done everything that she could. Wondering not a little at this evidence of courage and determination, and grudging the acknowledging of its character, Dorothy Arden turned toward the wounded foot of her half-fainting companion. The stocking was badly torn, and the thin silk of the sole had been worn to rags by the walk across the sands. Dorothy Arden turned it back and bared the foot. The cut ran right across the sole. It was filled with sand and in bad condition. No wonder Dorothy Cassilis had come so near fainting.

Dorothy Arden did not give utterance to any expression of sympathy for, or appreciation of, the other woman; there was too much between them for that: but she went about the work of dressing the wound with business-like promptitude and care. Other strips from the now sadly depleted underskirts sufficed to wash it and bind it up. Dorothy Cassilis faintly protested and endeavored in vain to stop her.

"I don't do it from any other motive than common humanity," said Dorothy Arden harshly, almost cruelly. "Hating you as I do for your conduct, I ought to let you die."

"And I'd rather die than be beholden to you."

"Doubtless, but we have got to live here on the island for a time at least,

and we have another life to watch over. The sooner you are in shape to do your share, the better. I don't want two helpless invalids on my hands. Now I have done everything I can for you. You are perfectly safe here. I do not think there is anything on the island to harm us. All you have to do is to sit quietly and watch over my husband."

"Mine," came the prompt answer.

"Mr. Lovell, if that pleases you better, while I—"

"Where are you going?" asked Dorothy Cassilis as the other woman rose.

"I am going to search the place where we fell to see if I can find the field glasses and your missing shoe, and then I am going back to where we ate our luncheon to get what we left behind. It was in a water-proof basket, and there was much left uneaten."

"But you will be drenched."

Dorothy Arden laughed.

"What of it? I expect we will be forced to submit to all the vicissitudes of nature before the *Wanderer* gets back, and we need food badly enough for me to risk a wetting."

BY that time the rain was coming down in torrents, although the expected gale of wind had not yet materialized. Dorothy Arden remembered a sailor's rhyme she had heard aboard the yacht:

With the rain before the wind,
Your tops'll halliards you must mind.

It had not yet come on to blow, but it would soon, and when it did it would be terrific. She had no idea how long it would be before the wind came or what her position would be out in the open under such conditions. But that was a risk she had to take.

She was drenched to the skin in a moment, but gathering her skirts about her so as to free her legs for easy movement, she ran rapidly to the place of the fall. It was not difficult to discover the field glasses, unbroken in their leather case, and after a more careful search she also found Dorothy Cassilis' shoe.

Grasping them tightly, she ran down

the beach until she came to the cleft which gave entrance to the plateau. It was already filling with water from the upland. She splashed through and on, fighting the drive of the rain and the increasing torrent until she passed through the narrow entrance and gained the plateau. Across this she ran until she reached the trees under which they had partaken of their noon-day meal. She stopped a moment to survey the rain-beaten ocean. The yacht had been completely lost to sight in the torrential downpour. The steward of the yacht had packed a bounteous supply of lunch, including a vacuum bottle of coffee and one of bouillon in a water-proof basket. Into an empty compartment she thrust shoe and binoculars. She strapped the basket up tightly to preserve the contents from the water, and started on her return journey.

As she got out in the open from the shelter of the trees, the wind, which had come at last, struck her with terrific force. She had to fight desperately to keep her feet. With a speed which she did not dream she could make, she tore across the uneven rock, reaching the narrow entrance of the ravine just as the wind rose with new violence. She plunged recklessly through the rocks and down the narrow broken trail. The rain beat upon her so heavily that she staggered. The narrow ravine was bank full, and as it grew deeper, the waters rushed down in torrents. It was only by clinging to vines and undergrowth that sprung from crannies in the wall on either side that she finally gained the lower reaches, where the ravine broadened and the water grew shallower.

She still had a long way to go, but her progress now was child's play compared to what it had been. Finally she staggered into the niche, where the other two were safe, dry and as comfortable as could be under the circumstances.

"You have been gone over two hours," said Dorothy Cassilis, looking at her watch.

"I am thankful to have got here at all," was the curt reply. "I have brought back the lunch basket, the field glasses and your shoe. We did not drink half the coffee or half the bouillon, and there

is enough bread and meat for two or three meals. The water-proof cover has kept everything dry, too," she added after brief examination; then she sank down on the sand a wet, sodden, exhausted mass of humanity.

"That coffee and that bouillon will still be hot; you had better take some of it," urged Dorothy Cassilis.

"No," was the prompt answer, "we must save it for him. That is all he can eat."

"But you will catch your death of cold."

"I burn inside with such a fire that the rain is nothing to me," said Dorothy Arden. "Where is that whisky flask?"

"Here."

"Hand it to me."

The soaked, worn-out, bruised and torn woman poured herself a liberal draught, such as under other circumstances she would not have dared to take. She reached the cup out into the rain and soon had it full of water. After that she slipped off what remained of her dress and wrung the water as well as she could out of the skirt. She was about to put in on again when Dorothy Cassilis ripped the tunic from her own skirt and handed the dry garment to her sister. Dorothy Arden did not wish to take it, but as Dorothy Cassilis remarked:

"It is not because I have changed my opinion about you, but because I am in a helpless state and your health is necessary to him, that I make the offer."

Therefore Dorothy Arden accepted it. It was a complete over-skirt, and it covered her well. So far as her waist was concerned, that had to go wet. She sat down on the sand, opened the basket and handed a sandwich to Dorothy Cassilis.

"We must eat," she said, "to keep up our strength."

"And when this is gone?"

"We shall find something else."

She helped herself as well, and there the two sat, the man between them. He had fallen into some kind of sleep, it seemed, for he lay quietly. They stared out from the shadow cast by the overhanging wall at the torrent of rain driven fiercely athwart their vision by the most terrific gusts of wind they had ever



Dorothy Arden was busy with the sailor's palm and needle which she had found in the ditty bag, while Dorothy Cassilis sat
"I will not be put off any longer



with her hands clasped around her drawn-up knees, staring seaward. "I certainly must have an explanation," said Lovell. on the plea of weakness."

encountered. They could not see beyond the edge of the lagoon, but mingled with the shriek of the wind they heard the awful crash of the gale-driven waves, the wind-whipped seas, on the barrier reef, which was here nearer the shore than at any other point in the circle.

Before darkness enveloped them Lovell moved. He opened his eyes a moment, looked about him. They bent to look and listen. He uttered just one word, a name—

"Dorothy," he said quietly, closing his eyes again.

"My name, you see," said Dorothy Arden triumphantly.

"Mine," said Dorothy Cassilis with equal joy.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TREASURES OF THE SANDS

INEVITABLY the two women passed a miserable night. Dorothy Cassilis' foot pained her extremely in spite of the dressing. The harsh usage to which she had subjected it in her self-sacrificing efforts to help Lovell had to be paid for. Dorothy Arden was wet and cold and weary, and that neglected gash on her arm was sufficiently evident to keep her awake had there been nothing else. To all these physical disabilities were added the terribly exhaustive mental strains to which they had been subjected.

Robert Lovell appeared to be the most comfortable of them all. Some fever had developed, but that was to be expected. He too was uneasy and wakeful, sometimes babbling incoherently but at times dwelling upon incidents which had evidently happened on his first visit to the island, and for longer periods lying quiet and still. Twice he repeated the name "Dorothy," but without adding any surname. There was little the women could do for him except bathe his head from time to time and administer spoonfuls of the broth which the vacuum bottle still kept delightfully hot, and for which in their present state they were profoundly thankful.

The storm raged violently throughout

the night, but the wind, although it changed, did not blow into the niche, and so they were comparatively sheltered and safe from the rain—which was a good thing for them. They were without protection from the chilly downpour save that afforded by the rock, and Dorothy Arden at least knew what it was to be drenched to the skin.

WHEN a tropic island lives up to its name and reputation, it is a most delightful spot; when it is rainy and cold and stormy, even under the equator, it becomes a most disagreeable place. The morning broke gray and sodden. The rain finally had ceased and the wind was appreciably dying down, but the sky was still overcast. Nevertheless, the two haggard, tired women greeted the returning dawn with joy. There was still enough substantial food in the lunch basket for the day, provided they partook of it sparingly. After it was eaten they would have to shift for themselves, but they never doubted they could manage to find all they needed in that rich and fertile island. They would have given worlds for a cup of the coffee or even a taste of the bouillon, but both were rigorously reserved for the sick man. The heat of her strong, healthy young body had at last dried Dorothy Arden's clothing; so after breakfast, bedraggled, dilapidated but resolute, she sallied forth to see what she could see and to find what she could find. She was loath to leave Dorothy Cassilis alone with Lovell, but there was no help for that. The two women agreed to let their claims to him rest for the present, or until the man got well again. Lovell evidently was suffering from shock, the consequences of which seemed to the two women out of proportion to the injury he had sustained. The worst feature of his condition was his total loss of memory for recent happenings.

Conversation between the two women had been and continued to be limited to the absolutely necessary exchanges of speech, so that although Dorothy Arden had some very definite plans, she vouchsafed no explanation of them to Dorothy Cassilis. Before she went, she carefully bathed and redressed the girl's wounded

foot. Again she did this in a grim, stoical, almost cynical way which made it entirely evident that as before it was purely a matter of humanity and duty.

Which had the less happy morning was difficult to tell. At least Dorothy Cassilis could forget the uncertainties and perils of the situation in contemplation of the helpless man whom she loved. She was utterly at loss to understand the amazing assurance and duplicity of Dorothy Arden, for so, never doubting, she characterized her conduct. She hated the woman, and yet in her calmer mood she was forced to admit that she neither looked nor behaved like a liar. Her claims and her actions were alike inexplicable.

Wavering doubts of Robert Lovell would insinuate themselves in Miss Cassilis' mind, naturally, although she generally succeeded in dismissing them. Could he actually have gone through some sort of marriage ceremony? Had he, beguiled by Dorothy Arden, who doubtless had shamelessly thrown herself at his head, made some vague promises to her which the ambitious and aspiring woman regarded as equivalent to a marriage ceremony?

In the end she put the doubts resolutely out of her mind. It could not be. It was unthinkable that he had taken any advantage of Dorothy Arden's obvious devotion. It was only a bold attempt to win Lovell away from her. Well, if he lived, he would doubtless be able to explain all. She did not regret that sudden assertion of wifehood into which she had been surprised by the other woman's audacity and assurance.

She resolved again that she would never give him up without a battle. In New York or Chicago it would have been different, but this was a desert island, leagues of seas from places and peoples who stood for conventions. The island was like the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve and the addition of Lilith. Conventions were like the garments they wore. Their clothes had not been calculated for such hard usage, and Dorothy Cassilis found herself ruefully wondering wherewith they should dress themselves if their stay should be unduly prolonged. She did not think that

would be the case, of course. The waves still rolled mightily over that storm-tossed sea, but the tempest had stilled and the yacht would surely return shortly, perhaps that very day.

Dorothy Arden seemed to have taken command of the situation on the island. Let them once get back on the ship, and she would be thrust back into her proper station, thought Dorothy Cassilis; and yet strange as it may seem, there was a certain amount of liking, even admiration for the other woman in her heart. She could hardly look at her bandaged foot without that. She hung over Lovell, changing and cleansing the bandages, observing that the flow of blood had ceased entirely and the cut in the head looked healthy, and finally lost herself in dreams of a future in which the other woman played no part.

DOROTHY ARDEN went around the shoulder of the wall, where she had a full view of the beach until it was lost in the curving of the island on either hand. The blue beauty had gone out of the sea. Although the wind was dying down, the waves ran more terrifically than ever. The spray shot into the air for thirty feet as the huge combers fell savagely on the barrier. Upon it and over it the long rollers swept with tremendous force.

There was not a thing to be seen on the gray horizon. She had half expected to see the yacht, but a moment's recollection told her that even under the most favorable conditions the *Wanderer* could not possibly return before the next day. That the yacht would return within a few days she doubted no more than Dorothy Cassilis. Therefore, after a momentary scanning of the horizon, she turned her gaze to the shore.

Far down to her left she saw a dark object embedded in the sand. She did not think it had been there the day before. She finally made it out to be a small boat, the yacht's dinghy, without a doubt, which they had used for carrying the water casks.

She ran over the sand and soon reached the boat. It had been driven ashore by the wind or the waves or both, and was lying on its beam ends

firmly embedded in the sand. It was partially full of water. Lashed to the thwarts was a long, dark bundle of tarred canvas. She clambered into the boat and with her fingers fumbled at the wet lashing. She noted that the tightly wrapped bundle apparently was composed of several thicknesses of heavy tarpaulin. Whatever was inside probably would be dry.

She had never before appreciated the beauty of a sailor's knot, which holds like iron and yet can be undone in a hurry and without too great an effort. Presently she succeeded in getting the lashings loose and laying the bundle on the sand, where she quickly rolled back the thicknesses of tarpaulin, to discover inside of it a repeating rifle, a pistol, a short-handled ax or heavy hatchet, and a little canvas bag. The rifle was up-to-date and loaded. The pistol, an automatic, also was charged. There were no other cartridges. The tarpaulin was perhaps six by eight feet in size and in perfect condition. She glanced in the bag and found it was a sailor's ditty bag. She examined the contents quickly and discovered a needle and palm, or sailor's thimble, a packet of heavy needles used for sewing canvas, spools of thread, a knife, scissors and number of small articles usually to be found in such receptacles. The ax was new and sharp.

After a moment's thought Dorothy Arden decided that Mr. Mattern, who had charge of the boat party, thinking of their possible need, had put these things, which happened to be in the launch, into the dinghy which the launch had been towing and had cast it adrift as he was called back to the yacht, in the hope that it might be blown ashore. If they were compelled to an extended sojourn on the island, these articles would be priceless.

Rummaging further in the boat, in a locker forward she found a breaker of fresh water and in the corresponding place aft a bag of hard bread, very sodden with sea and rain water. Leaving the boat after observing that it was so firmly wedged in the sand that it would not drift out to sea, Miss Arden put the other things in the tarpaulin and carried them back to the niche in the

wall, where she briefly accounted for them to Dorothy Cassilis and after a careful inspection of the patient, set forth again.

THIS time she went along the wall of the rock to the right of the cliff, which gave entrance to the upland she had already traversed so many times. The rift was filled with débris. Several huge palms had been uprooted by the wind, but she managed to climb over them, and at last reached the upland. The storm had been devastating and the island gave evidence of it. Tall coconut palms had been blown down by the wind, and plenty of nuts lay on the ground. Several broken trunks of others showed that they were sago palms, but she passed these by with but little notice, not understanding their value. She was seeking dry wood. Here and there she found dead branches which were only superficially wetted. She gathered a great armful, bound them together with creepers and took them back to the camp. She spread her wood out on the dry sand and sturdily went forth again. This time she came back loaded with coconuts and pineapples.

They broke their fast together at noon by Dorothy Cassilis' watch, which she carefully kept wound, and were rejoiced in the afternoon to see the sun come forth.

The brilliant sun soon dried the island, and the second night they passed much more comfortably than the first. By morning, Lovell was conscious although very weak. By the agreement they had entered upon, neither woman troubled him with questions or demands of any sort. He lay silent most of the time, accepting their ministrations, obeying their commands and surveying them with wondering eyes.

By nightfall of the second day, what they had saved for him from the lunch basket was gone. In a pool in a hollow of a rock near the beach Dorothy Arden found a live fish washed up by the storm. She caught it with her hands and cleaned it with a sheath knife from the ditty bag. If they only had a fire, she could have made a nourishing broth of the fish for the invalid and cooked a

portion of it for themselves. They were sick of the fruit diet which had supplemented the scraps from the lunch basket, and were hungry. Dorothy Arden remembered that she had seen Lovell using a match box to light a cigarette. She examined his vest pocket and found it. There were only two or three matches left in it, and she did not dare use them that night. She looked at her dry wood mournfully. Could she make a fire by rubbing sticks like a savage, or a Boy Scout? She knew she could not. Lovell had watched her carefully. Apparently he divined her dilemma. The women were surprised to hear him say quite clearly, if slowly and brokenly:

"If you want to make a fire—why don't you use—the field glasses?"

For a moment neither guessed the purport of his words.

"He means to use the lens as a burning glass," Dorothy Cassilis finally cried.

"Certainly," said Dorothy Arden, resentful that the other should have anticipated her even for a moment. "We will have to wait for the morning and bright sunlight to try that; meanwhile there is a little of the coffee for him during the night, and perhaps the *Wanderer* will return to-morrow."

But at daybreak no *Wanderer* appeared; nor did she come back as one day succeeded another while the long weeks ran slowly by.

CHAPTER XVII

LIFE ON THE ISLAND

"I CERTAINLY must have an explanation," said Lovell several weeks later. "I will not be put off any longer on the plea of weakness. You have both attended me beautifully, and I am deeply grateful. I don't know what happened to me, but I am sure that I could not have pulled through without you. I have been content to wait your pleasure for an explanation, but I can wait no longer."

Dorothy Arden looked at Dorothy Cassilis. They had succeeded in putting off the inevitable day thus long, but they

recognized that they could postpone it no longer. There was justice in Robert Lovell's demand.

It was evening. Out of the circle of the sea the full moon rose. It bade fair to be a tropic night of surpassing splendor. Lovell was half reclining on the sand, his back comfortably supported by a pile of rounded weather-worn coral over which the tarpaulin had been spread. The two women sat a little distance away, one on either side of him. It was characteristic of the two that Dorothy Arden was busy with the sailor's palm and needle which she had found in the ditty bag, while Dorothy Cassilis sat with her hands clasped around her drawn-up knees, staring seaward. Before them a low fire burned in a rude fire-place made of blocks of coral. In a huge sea-shell over the fire a savory broth was steaming. They had made some progress toward gaining the material comforts of life, it was evident.

Lovell was still clothed in his once trim white flannels, now soiled and dilapidated. A thick growth of curly brown beard covered his gaunt, haggard face. But that he was recovering from his long illness was evident not only from the words he had spoken so emphatically, but from his looks as well. There was a light in his eyes and a growing touch of color in his lips which the women loved to see.

The two women were dressed in garments they had improvised out of a sort of cloth which they had plaited and woven from long rushes which grew abundantly on the island. The tunics, if so they may be called, were sleeveless. The nondescript garment fell from the neck to the knees and was tied about the waist by pieces of small line, or rope, which had been carefully saved from the fittings of the dinghy.

What remained of their civilized clothing had been carefully mended and piled in a recess of the niche, against the day, that longed-for day, when it would be in demand again. After a period of hard usage, the two women had become convinced that these fragile draperies of civilization must be preserved for the return of the yacht or the visit of some other ship to the island.

With great ingenuity Dorothy Cassilis, who proved herself much the more adept in accomplishments feminine, had woven and plaited the tunics, and somehow or other, they were not unbecoming to their wearers. Dorothy Arden had fashioned rude moccasins for each of them out of pieces of the heavy canvas tarpaulin. She had also improvised a sort of a legging, something like a puttee, which reached to their knees and was held in place by criss-cross lashings of braided palm-fiber.

The two women had profited by the free, unrestrained life of the island. They were in superb health; and but for their anxiety over Lovell's condition, their alarm over the failure of the yacht to return for them, and above all for this rivalry, which grew rather than abated, they would have been happy in their unique adventure.

They made full use of all the opportunities of life presented by the tropic paradise. They swam in the warm, pellucid waters of the lagoon. They refreshed themselves with shower baths in the cooler fresh water of the brook that fell over the cliff hard by. For food they gathered the luscious fruits of the island. They made flour from the sago palm, and bread from the fruit of the famous tree. They diversified their diet with fish caught in rocky pools along the shore after a high tide, with mussels and other shell-fish, and even managed a small turtle, and found the daily fare amazingly agreeable and nourishing. The lens from the binoculars enabled them to have a fire whenever they would. They actually thrived upon the strange new bill of fare.

It was characteristic of the two that Dorothy Arden's beautiful chestnut hair had been combed with the invaluable little comb in the vanity bag and braided and severely coiled above her classic head, while Dorothy Cassilis' golden hair, no less beautiful than her sister's darker locks, hung in long braids down her breast. Above one ear, she had thrust a gorgeous scarlet flower, like a hibiscus, which grew profusely among many other radiant blossoms in this South-sea Eden. Over her shoulder a wreath of leaves and blossoms had been

carefully draped and pinned on by long thorns, for which they found a variety of uses. Dorothy Arden in her severe simplicity looked with contempt on these feminine touches of adornment, but when she saw Lovell's eyes sometimes rest approvingly on the lovely flowers, she wished that she had thought of the practice herself. Now she was too proud to imitate the other woman.

When they came to realize that their stay on the island bade fair to be an indefinite one, they had decided on a temporary mode of life while waiting Lovell's recovery for a final decision. The niche in the rock could only be a transitory abiding place—the rainy season would compel them to seek other quarters; meanwhile they had made arrangements the better to fit it for their present needs. By three wattled partitions which ran from the rock outwardly a sufficient distance, with corresponding cross partitions, they had divided it into three small rooms. The center one, where the niche had the greatest depth and was best protected, they had allotted to Lovell. Those on either side they had taken themselves, securing a certain degree of privacy for each occupant and at the same time bringing themselves equally in touch with the man they both claimed.

In all their association of work and play, in all their labors, they spoke no unnecessary words to each other. They perforce ate together and slept in the same shelter; otherwise they lived apart, each jealously watchful of the other as she ministered to Lovell, and each waiting for the deciding time, which was now upon them. They had been over three weeks on the island. Where the yacht had gone, why she did not come for them, or send for them, or what her fate had been, they could only speculate upon. Two facts alone stood out boldly: she had gone; she had not returned.

"I THINK," continued Lovell after a long pause, "that I am fully able to shift for myself now and indeed to take upon myself every day more and more of the burdens of you two. All sorts of confused remembrances are running through my head, things so incredible



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that I am forced to believe that they are hallucinations. You must tell me everything truthfully, now."

As usual, it was Dorothy Arden who answered Lovell's question.

"First, tell us how much you know," she began.

"I know that I am Robert Lovell, that I was graduated last year from Harvard, went on a cruise around the world in my father's yacht, the *Wanderer*, and landed on this island with Allison, Roberts and Tenney and other fellows of my class who were my guests. I have heard you call each other Miss Arden and Miss Cassilis, which I assume to be your surnames; but how you got here, and who you are, and where the yacht is, and where my friends are, I haven't the least idea."

"How old were you when you were graduated from Harvard?"

"Twenty-two."

"And in what year did you graduate?"

"I told you, last year."

"What year was last year?"

"What a foolish question!" said Lovell a little impatiently. "Nineteen-eight."

"Well, this year," returned the girl, looking up from her sewing, "is nineteen-fourteen."

"What?"

"Nineteen-fourteen. Ask Miss Cassilis."

Lovell raised himself to a sitting position and looked at the other girl, who had hitherto remained silent.

"Is it possible!" he exclaimed. "Tell me, is the young lady dreaming?"

"She is telling the simple truth, now," answered Dorothy Cassilis with a perceptible pause and emphasis in the adverb. "This is the year nineteen hundred and fourteen."

"Have I lost six years somewhere?" asked the amazed man. "Where are Allison, Roberts and Tenny?"

"Do you mean Billy Allison?" asked Dorothy Cassilis.

"Certainly."

"He is a broker in Chicago and doing very well."

"And I have heard of Mr. Roberts as a promising young engineer in Central America," said Dorothy Arden.

"Good God!" exclaimed Lovell with utter incredulity. "You can't be joking. What has happened?"

"It seems to me," said Dorothy Arden gravely, "that you have lost six years out of your life, incredible as it may seem."

"But how? I don't understand."

"I'll try to tell you. We landed from the *Wanderer* about a month ago."

"I was right about the yacht then?"

"Yes, only this is another cruise. Many things have happened since you came here first with your friends. You had a bad fall the day we landed. We all did. And when you came to yourself you had forgotten the immediate past; you don't seem to remember it yet."

Lovell passed his hand across his brow in complete bewilderment. He looked again at the other woman. She nodded her head in confirmation.

"That is exactly what happened," she said.

"You two are mad, or I am," said the young man. As he spoke, his glance took in their decidedly nondescript garments.

"You might think only madwomen would dress like this," observed Dorothy Cassilis with a melancholy smile.

"I didn't say so," he answered in polite deprecation.

"Well, for your information, there is nothing else we can do," she explained, Dorothy Arden remaining silent as if uninterested in such trivialities. "The clothes with which we came ashore were torn into rags, and our linen has been used for bandages for your head and my foot. We had to make these things we are wearing for decency's sake if for no other reason."

"It seems impossible that both of you could be mad," said Lovell tactfully.

"We are entirely sane and absolutely at one, on that subject, at least," said Dorothy Arden in turn.

"But on no other subject are we at one," said Dorothy Cassilis with a direct look at the other woman.

"This is quite beyond me," said Lovell, his mystification greatly increased by this verbal thrust and parry. He could feel the mutual antagonism of the two women, although he could not

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realize why each regarded the other with hatred and suspicion. "Wont one of you tell me simply and briefly what I have been doing in the six years that I seem to have lost, and how we came to be here? There is in my mind an incredible statement or claim with which you are concerned which I must have dreamed—it is so mad and so fantastic," he said.

"Will you tell him, Miss Cassilis?" asked Miss Arden.

"No, as you are his father's stenographer," Miss Cassilis answered meaningfully, emphasizing the word as if to establish a difference in the relative positions of the two women, "you probably know more about the family history than I. I will take it up where you leave off."

"As you will," said Dorothy Arden coldly.

Clearly and succinctly, she narrated in broad outline Robert Lovell's gay and rather useless life. Rapidly she brought the chronicle down to the writing of the novel. Lovell had not the faintest remembrance of any single fact which she set forth, although he listened with the closest attention.

When she came to the completion of the novel, Miss Arden paused instinctively in her rapid narration. Dorothy Cassilis realized that here was the climax of the story. Her hands unclasped themselves; she turned, and resting on one hand she looked intently at the speaker, as did Robert Lovell himself. Both hearts—indeed, all three—were beating rapidly with the excitement of the moment.

"And so I wrote a novel, did I?" asked Lovell in the pause.

"Yes."

"A good novel?"

"Splendid," answered the girl. "And at the climax something happened."

"What was that?"

"You married me."

"What?"

"You married me. You see, I had 'taken' the novel at your dictation. You had put yourself and me in the story. Don't you remember? You made love to me that way. You slipped and fell. Your foot struck mine and I cut my head against a chair as I went down. Don't you remember?"

And then she stopped again. She had been telling the story in a detached, impersonal sort of way, but now she turned and looked straight into Robert Lovell's eyes, fairly enveloping him with her intent gaze, as if she had concentrated every bit of force in her body and soul to summon back his recollection.

Lovell shook his head.

"And then?" he asked.

"I came to life in your arms. You said you loved me. Your father had other plans for you. You were angry at the idea of marrying Miss Cassilis here."

LOVELL turned and saw Dorothy Cassilis, now on her knees, her hands clasped, her eyes sparkling, her bosom heaving, her lip quivering.

"And so I married you?"

"You did, at the Little Church Around the Corner, the Church of the Transfiguration, in New York City."

"Are you sure," burst out Dorothy Cassilis, unable longer to control herself, "that you didn't write that novel yourself, Miss Arden? It seems to me you have qualities which would enable you to shine in romance. You are trying to take my place."

"I was not mistaken then," said Lovell. "I didn't dream that you both claimed to be my wife."

"No, you didn't dream it," said Dorothy Cassilis quickly. "Be silent and let me speak."

Dorothy Arden made an angry movement as if to interrupt, but Robert Lovell put up his hand.

"Turn about is fair play," he said. "She heard you without interruption. After I—er—married Miss Arden, what happened?"

"I don't know anything about your marrying Miss Arden. I don't believe you ever did. I think her statement is a deliberate lie, made simply to get you from me," answered Dorothy Cassilis.

"And you, how did you enter the story?" asked Lovell.

"Your father became suddenly ill. The doctor told him to give up business. There was some great scheme in which he was interested with my father. He sent you to Chicago to represent him. You were successful, I believe; at any

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rate, I met you on a train which was wrecked in northern Ohio. You saved my life. You must remember that," she continued, as Lovell shook his head. "I was not going on the yachting cruise, which had been arranged by your father and for which he invited my father and mother and me to be his guests, but you persuaded me to go. My father and your father planned that you and I should marry."

"And did we?" asked Lovell.

"We did," said the girl firmly, quite convinced that by this means only could she protect the establishment of a claim by her rival which would forever take Lovell from her.

"Impossible!" interrupted Dorothy Arden, who had thrown aside her work and, as was her custom, had risen to her feet and stood looking down on the reclining man and the kneeling woman by his side. "Will you say when and where?" continued Miss Arden.

"Not to you."

"But if I ask it?" said Lovell gently.

"After we joined the yachting party we went ashore on the day she sailed," answered the woman, who had rehearsed this answer in her mind until she had become letter perfect in her part. And her belief in her justification gave her words all the emphasis of the truth.

"And was that when we were married?"

"Yes," said the girl, forcing herself to speak the definite word.

"Where?"

"At Trinity Church, San Francisco."

"It's false," said Dorothy Arden furiously, "a willful, deliberate lie. I swear before God that you married me, that I am your wife, that I have told you the whole truth—nothing but the truth."

"Were you with us ashore that day at San Francisco?" asked Lovell.

"I was not."

"How came you to be on the yacht?"

"Your father sent for me. He needed my services."

"And we went ashore that afternoon?" continued Lovell, turning to the other.

"Absolutely!" declared Miss Cassilis.

"How then," he asked, turning to Dorothy Arden, "can you be sure that this lady is not telling the truth?"

"Because I know you, because I love you," was the bold answer.

"And knowing me?"

"I know you could not be guilty of so despicable and illegal an action."

This was a deft and appealing reply. Lovell turned to the other woman. Dorothy Arden's dark cheek was flushed, Dorothy Cassilis' fair one was pale.

"And because I know—because I know—your love for me," she said promptly in her turn, "I know that what she says is a lie. I am your wife. It was I you loved."

"The opinion in which you both hold me," said Lovell after a long pause, "would be highly flattering to me and deeply gratifying, were it not evident that if both of you are telling the truth I must be a bigamist and blackguard. I don't know how I may have deteriorated since I remember myself—"

"No, no," protested Dorothy Arden.

"Impossible!" said Dorothy Cassilis.

But Lovell waved them to silence.

"I don't know how I may have deteriorated in the six years that are a blank to me, but I dare affirm that were I in my senses I should never have put myself, to say nothing of you, in such a position."

"You never were clearer headed in your life than the day you married me," said Dorothy Arden.

"And did you notice any mental or moral deterioration in him that day we left San Francisco?" queried Dorothy Cassilis.

The question went unanswered.

"Can't you remember anything at all?" urged Dorothy Arden, passionately pleading with him. "Don't you recall that day in your office? Have you forgotten absolutely?"

"Or that night on the ship?" cried Dorothy Cassilis with equal urgency and devotion in her appeal.

"There is but one thing that is vaguely in my memory," answered Lovell, sitting up.

"What is it?" cried Dorothy Cassilis.

"Tell us," urged Dorothy Arden.

"It is a woman's name—Dorothy."

"My name," said Miss Arden triumphantly.

"And mine," was the instant response.

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"Is it possible?" said Lovell, looking from one to the other.

"Each of us can testify in this instance that the other speaks the truth," said Miss Arden impatiently. "You surely can recall something else. Think, think."

"Absolutely nothing, on my honor as a man," said Lovell.

"Try; you *must* remember," urged Dorothy Cassilis.

"I have thought while you have ministered to me, while you bound me to silence. I have watched you. There is something familiar to me about both of you, but as to what you both claim, I swear on my honor I know nothing about it."

Dorothy Arden suddenly bent over him. She knelt beside him. She took his hand in hers and laid it on her heart. She drew him close to her in spite of Dorothy Cassilis' movement to prevent.

"Wait," she said; "your turn next."

She pressed his head against her bosom. He was weak and surprised. He made no resistance, until finally he lay in her arms, close against her heart. She looked down upon him, her soul in her eyes.

"Now," she said tremulously, "surely you can feel the truth in the beating of my heart."

But Lovell drew himself away.

"It is ineffably condescending of you," he said gently, almost pityingly, "and I suppose I feel just what any man might feel who—"

Dorothy Arden drew away and fell back with a gesture almost despairing.

Dorothy Cassilis suddenly bent over the man and boldly kissed him full upon the lips.

"Does not that awaken your heart?" she murmured, her face close to his own.

"I have never been kissed by a sweeter woman, I swear," said Lovell gravely and kindly, but his meaning was obvious, and in turn Dorothy Cassilis drew back, hid her face in her hands and wept.

"You are both in earnest then?" thoughtfully said Lovell, at last, unable even yet to bring himself to a comprehension of the reality of the claims of these women.

"In earnest," cried Dorothy Arden. "I am your wife. I confess that I love

you, have loved you ever since I first saw you, that to be your wife is the realization of my fondest dream. Will you take me now into your arms, Robert Lovell, and—and—is this the proof that you lack?"

She dropped on her knees beside him and stretched out her hands to him, forgetful for the moment of everything but of him and the words that she had said. It was her last appeal, her final offer. No woman could say or do more. Robert Lovell looked at her a long time. If ever a woman spoke the truth, it was she; if ever a genuine passion throbbed in a human voice, it throbbed in hers; if ever word and look and gesture carried out speech and proffer, these corroborated her words.

"You love me? Great God," he said, "it is impossible."

"And I—" cried Dorothy Cassilis, swept away from her bearings and deeply moved almost to desperation by what she believed the other woman's offer of a complete and utter sacrifice of herself to establish and enforce her preposterous claim. "And I," she repeated, her face whiter than ever, but her shining eyes betraying her mad resolve to rise to the same measure of self sacrifice. "And does anyone dream that I—that I—"

After all, she could not finish the sentence. She hid her face in her hands. She bowed her head across his knees and knelt there shaking, wondering in her agony what meaning he would put upon her words, what he would understand.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE THREE SLEEPERS ON THE SAND

LOVELL gently drew himself away from Dorothy Cassilis and refusing Dorothy Arden's quickly proffered assistance slowly rose to his feet. He stood leaning against one of the huge rocks that had become detached from the wall and strove to steady himself. He felt that in a standing position he could better meet the problem which confronted him, and although he was not yet sure of himself physically, the excitement lent him a fictitious strength that would serve for the present. He



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spoke slowly, but more carefully and more decisively than he had done heretofore.

"It is impossible," he said, drawing back against the supporting rock so that he could comprehend with his gaze at one and the same time both the standing and the kneeling woman, "for me to doubt either of you, whatever may be the explanation of this most extraordinary situation. While it is inconceivable that I could have married both of you, and I have no recollection, as I have said, of marrying either of you, it is also inconceivable that either of you should be telling a falsehood to establish a claim upon me. Forgive me if I speak in a way that seems vain or conceited."

"Speak as you feel, without hesitation," said Dorothy Arden promptly.

"Yes, let there be no concealment," brokenly assented Dorothy Cassilis in a hollow voice, looking fearfully up at him.

"Any man on earth might be glad to call either of you his wife," said Lovell. "I suppose no man ever had such a proffer of love as you have each made to me,"—the color came into his face a little as he spoke softly.—"and I am not different from other men. It has touched me and appealed to me. If what you say be true and there is no mistake and no way of accounting for it, I must have played the scoundrel's part. Let me now redeem myself so far as may be. It is impossible in my present state of being, especially since my total loss of memory, that I should accept either one of you as my wife," he said with a finality that closed the case against both petitioners.

Dorothy Arden clenched her hands in an unconscious gesture of disappointment and forced renunciation. Dorothy Cassilis bowed her head and hid her face again. She dared not let the others see that natural relief flooded her heart, so great that no words could have expressed it. She had escaped the consequences of her own rash and hastily spoken words.

"I will be to both of you a true and faithful friend and comrade," he went on. "I will serve you loyally to the best of my ability. When I have learned all

that has happened in the past, I shall be better fitted to deal with the situation, to plan our life on the island, to make it comfortable for you, to relieve you of care and anxiety, to protect you and finally devise some means of getting away. Please God the curtain that falls before my mind and covers those years of which you tell me may some day be rolled up. Then I shall know the truth and know what to do; but to-night there is nothing more that I can say or hear."

They noticed that the tenseness suddenly left his body. He leaned heavily upon the rock. He was unutterably weary. They had forgotten his condition. They both moved toward him with a simultaneous expression of regret, but he waved them aside.

"We shall continue," he said softly, gathering his strength for a final effort, "this conversation in the morning. No more, I beg of you. I can't bear another word."

He looked from one to the other a few moments, bowed to them, drew aside the screen that masked the cubicle which was his, and with a murmured good-night, went within.

WITHOUT noticing the other woman more than the sand under her feet, Dorothy Arden also went to her place of rest. Dorothy Cassilis sat a little longer before the fire before she followed the example of the other two.

And there they lay that night; two women and the man they loved between them, separated by flimsy partitions the feeblest hand could have torn down. Yet around them rose barriers of honor, Lovell's honor, which a giant might not have battered down, which indeed no one could do away with unless it were Lovell himself.

Of the three, the conscience of one was entirely clear. However foolish she might have been on the ship, on the island, Dorothy Arden had followed the honorable, truthful, devoted course toward the other two. The conscience of Dorothy Cassilis grew more and more insistent every hour. Suppose Dorothy Arden had spoken the truth, suppose Robert Lovell had married her and thereafter had fallen in love with Doro-

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**You
See
Through
the Open
Fabric**

thy Cassilis? Oh, it was all impossible! Lovell's reception of the declarations of herself and Dorothy Arden confirmed her in the belief that he could not have done anything underhand or secret.

Lovell had indeed done much to redeem his faults, but no man could ever rightfully occupy so high a position as she placed him in that night. She would win him away from the other woman, the stronger, larger, abler woman—she admitted that, yet a woman possibly lacking in some of those sweet and tender characteristics she knew men loved. She stretched out her hands toward the wattled partitions as she lay on the yielding sand, and in her movement there was longing entreaty.

And on the other side the hands of Dorothy Arden were stretched out in exactly the same way to the man who lay between them. How splendidly he had acted in the complication caused by what she believed to be the shameless scheming of Dorothy Cassilis. Of course, if Lovell had married Dorothy Cassilis—but that was impossible; no man in his senses could have done such a thing, with the other marriage so recently solemnized. And yet she had to think some one base and low. Inevitably that must be the other woman.

Well, some day the eyes of Lovell would be opened, and he would see. Some day the truth would be told. Meanwhile, they were just two women alone on an island with one man. She felt herself the abler, stronger woman, not perhaps in things feminine but surely a better match for this splendid man. If he never remembered, she could win him again; her chance was as good as—and yet her heart throbbed painfully when she thought of Dorothy Cassilis' indefinable and subtle charm, so unmistakable that even she recognized it.

Dorothy Cassilis had lived in that world of women and men where the one

had little to do but lead while the other followed. She was adept in all of the fascinations and graces of society, while Dorothy Arden had been learning life-lessons and conduct in the hard school in which daily bread is earned and prized. Dorothy Arden was at some disadvantage. Well, she would put her pride aside. She would take a leaf from her rival's book. She too would deck herself with blossoms and make herself beautiful for the man she loved, and so she stretched out her hands to him as her weaker rival had done, passionately wistful that he might soon see and believe.

And what of Lovell? On either side of that thin partition lay a woman who had declared her love for him. He was as honorable and clean-hearted a man as ever lived. He could not understand the situation. He could not bring himself to believe that he had been so great a scoundrel as the facts predicated, if they were the facts. He could not see any room for mistake—and yet mistake there must be.

He racked his brain for recollection, but uselessly. The immediate past was an absolute blank to him. He saw nothing and recalled nothing. These two women stood before him, the one tall and dark, nobly planned, commanding, splendid; the other smaller, softer, sweeter, more appealing. Well, if he had been the blackguard before, he was determined not to be so any longer.

There came no sleep to those upon the sand of life. Across the niche the moon poured its light. Over the island the stars hung silently. Into their ears came the low crash of the distant waves upon the reef. Gentle breezes stole in and out—to cool fevered brows and pallid lips and burning cheeks. It was as if the heavens themselves had made the environment in which the passions of man had planted the hell of jealousy and hate and envy and disappointment.

The next installment of "The Island of Surprise," in which Lovell comes to a surprising determination, will be in the June Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands May 22nd.

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A GREAT SUCCESS—by Mrs. Humphry Ward

Continued from page 28 of this issue.

"Well—has the success of the lectures surprised you?"

Doris pondered.

"No," she said, at last, "—not really. I always thought Arthur had it in him."

"But you hardly expected such a run—such an excitement?"

"I don't know," said Doris, coolly. "I think I did—sometime. The question is how long it will last."

She looked smiling at her interrogator.

The gentleman with the whiskers stooped across the table.

"Oh, nothing lasts in this world!" he observed. "But that of course is what makes a good time so good."

Doris turned towards him: "I never could understand how *Cinderella* enjoyed the ball."

"For thinking of the clock that was going to strike?" laughed Sir Charles.

"No, no! You can't mean that. It's the expectation of the clock that doubles the pleasure. Of course you agree, Rachel?" He turned to her. "Else why did you read me that very doleful poem yesterday, on this very theme?—that it's only the certainty of death that makes life agreeable. By the way, George Eliot has said it before!"

"The poem was by a friend of mine," said Lady Dunstable, coldly. "I read it to you to see how it sounded. But I thought it poor stuff."

"How unkind of you! The man who wrote it says he lives upon your friendship."

"Thin."

Sir Charles laughed again.

"To be sure, I saw the poor man—after you had talked to him the other night—going to Dunstable to be consoled. Poor George! he's always healing the wounds you make."

"Of course. That's why I married him. George says all the civil things. That sets me free to do the rude ones."

"Rachel!" The exclamation came from the plump lady opposite, who was smiling broadly, and showing some very

white teeth. A signal passed from her eyes to those of Doris, as much as to say, "Don't be alarmed!"

DORIS, however, was not at all alarmed. She was eagerly watching Lady Dunstable—as one watches for the mannerisms of some well-known performer. Sir Charles perceived it, and immediately began to show off his hostess by one of the sparring matches that were apparently frequent between them. They fell to discussing a party of guests—landowners from a neighboring estate—who seemed to have paid a visit to Crosby Ledgers the day before. Lady Dunstable had not enjoyed them, and her tongue on the subject was sharpness itself, restrained by none of the ordinary compunctions. "Is this how she talks about all her guests—on Monday morning?" thought Doris, with quickened pulse, as the biting sentences flew about: "Mr. Worthing? Why did he marry her? Oh, because he wanted a stuffed goose to sit by the fire while he went out and amused himself. . . . Why did she marry him? Ah, that's more difficult to answer. But, no doubt, because he looks everything a woman wants—strength, and ferocity. However, I like Mr. Worthing—he's what men ought to be."

Sir Charles chuckled over his cigarette: "Well, Rachel, all the same, you would die of Worthing's company in a month."

"I shouldn't die," said Lady Dunstable, quietly. "I should murder."

"Hullo, what's my wife talking about?" said a bluff and friendly voice. Doris looked up to see a handsome man with grizzled hair approaching.

"Mrs. Meadows? How do you do? What a beautiful evening you've brought. Your husband and I have been having a jolly talk. My word, he's a clever chap! Let me congratulate you on the lectures. Biggest success known in recent days!"

An Old Man at Fifty —A Young Man at Seventy

The Remarkable Story of Sanford Bennett, a San Francisco Business Man, Who Has Solved the Problem of Prolonging Youth

By CARL EASTON WILLIAMS

THERE is no longer any occasion to go hunting for the Spring of Eternal Youth. What Ponce de Leon failed to discover in his world-famous mission, ages ago, has been brought to light right here in staid, prosaic America, by Sanford Bennett, a San Francisco business man. He can prove it too, right in his own person.

At 50 he was partially bald. To-day he has a thick head of hair, although it is white. At 50 his eyes were weak. To-day they are as strong as when he was a child. At 50 he was a worn-out, broken-down, decrepit old man. To-day he is in perfect health, a good deal of an athlete and as young as the average man of 35.

All this he has accomplished by some very simple and gentle exercises which he practices for about ten minutes before arising in the morning. Yes, the exercises are taken in bed, peculiar as this may seem.

As Mr. Bennett explains, his case was not one of preserving good health, but one of rejuvenating a weak middle-aged body into a robust old one, and he says what he has accomplished, anyone can accomplish by the application of the same methods, whether they be young or old—male or female—and so it would seem. All of which puts the Dr. Osler theory to shame.

I haven't room in this article to go into a lengthy description of Mr. Bennett's methods for the restoration of youth and the prevention of old age. All of this he himself tells in

a book which he has written, entitled "Old Age—Its Cause and Prevention." This book is a complete history of himself and his experiences, and contains complete instructions for those who wish to put his health- and youth-building methods to their own use. It is a wonderful book. It is a book that every man and woman who is desirous of remaining young after passing the fiftieth, sixtieth, seventieth, and as Mr. Bennett firmly believes, the one hundredth milestone of life, should read.

For the purpose of spreading broadcast the methods of promoting health and longevity developed by Mr. Bennett an interesting eight-page booklet which is, in effect, a summary of his system, has been prepared by the publishers of Mr. Bennett's interesting book—the Physical Culture Publishing Company, 2505

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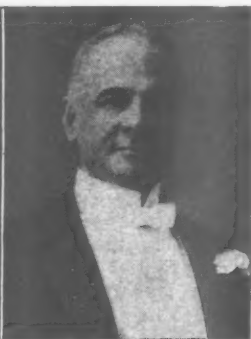
This booklet they will send free to anyone sufficiently interested to write for it.

The grandest thing in the world is Youth, and it is one of the really great hardships of life that "its beauteous morn" should pass so swiftly and give place to old age.

For having solved the problem of prolonging youth during life, the world owes Sanford Bennett a vote of thanks. Of course there are those who will scoff at the idea, but the really wise men and women among those who hear of Sanford Bennett and his return to youth, will most certainly investigate further, and at least acquire a knowledge of his methods.



Sanford Bennett
at 50



Sanford Bennett
at 72

Doris beamed upon her host, well pleased, and he settled down beside her, doing his kind best to entertain her. In him, all those protective feelings towards a stranger, in which his wife appeared to be conspicuously lacking, were to be discerned on first acquaintance. Doris was practically sure that his inner mind was thinking, "Poor little thing—knows nobody here! Rachel's been scaring her. Must look after her."

And look after her he did. He was by no means an amusing companion. Lazy, gentle, and ineffective as he was, Doris soon saw he was entirely eclipsed by his wife, who, now that she was relieved of Mrs. Meadows, became surrounded by a congenial company—the Home Secretary, one or two other politicians, the old General, a literary Dean, Lord Staines—a great racing man—Arthur Meadows, and one or two more. The talk became almost entirely political—with a dash of literature. Doris soon perceived that Lady Dunstable was the center of it, and she was not long in guessing that it was for this kind of talk that people came to Crosby Ledgers. Lady Dunstable, it seemed, was capable of talking like a man with men, and like a man of affairs with the men of affairs. Her political knowledge was astonishing; so, evidently, was her background of family and tradition, interwoven throughout with English political history. English statesmen had not only dandled her; they had taught her, walked with her, written to her, and—no doubt—flirted with her. Doris, as she listened to her, disliked her heartily, and at the same time could not help being thrilled by so much knowledge, so much contact with history in the making, and by such a masterful way, in a woman, with the great ones of the earth. "What a worm she must think me!" thought Doris. "What a worm she *does* think me—and the likes of me!"

AT the same time, the spectator must needs admit there was something else in Lady Dunstable's talk than mere intelligence or mere mannishness. There was undoubtedly something of "the good fellow;" and through all her hard hitting, a curious absence, in conversa-

tion, of the personal egotism she was quite ready to show in all the trifles of life. On the present occasion, her main object clearly was to bring out Arthur Meadows—the new captive of her bow and spear; to find out what was in him, to see if he was worthy of her inner circle. Throwing all compliment aside, she attacked him hotly on certain statements—certain estimates—in his lectures. Her knowledge was personal, the knowledge of one whose father had sat in Disraeli's latest Cabinet, while through the endless cousinship of the English landed families, she was as much related to the Whig as to the Tory leaders of the past. She talked familiarly of "Uncle This" or "Cousin That," who had been apparently the idols of her nursery before they had become the heroes of England; and Meadows had much ado to defend himself against her store of anecdote and reminiscence.

"Unfair!" thought Doris, breathlessly watching the contest of wits. "Oh, if she weren't a woman, Arthur could easily beat her!"

But she was a woman, and not at all unwilling, when hard pressed, to take advantage of the fact.

All the same, Meadows was stirred to most unwonted efforts. He proved himself an antagonist worth her steel; and Doris' heart swelled with secret pride as she saw how all the other voices died down, how more and more people came up to listen, even the young men and maidens—throwing themselves on the grass, around the two disputants. Finally Lady Dunstable carried off the honors. Had she not seen Lord Beaconsfield twice during the fatal week of his last general election, when England turned against him, when his great rival triumphed, and all was lost? Had he not talked to her, as great men will talk to the young and charming women whose flatteries soften their defeats, so that, from the wings, she had seen almost the last of that well-graced actor, caught his last gestures and some of his last words?

"Brava, brava!" said Meadows, when the story ceased, although it had been intended to upset one of his own most brilliant generalizations; and a sound of

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clapping hands went round the circle. Lady Dunstable, a little flushed and panting, smiled and was silent. Doris Meadows kept thinking, "How often has she told that tale? She has it by heart. Every touch in it has been sharpened a dozen times. All the same—a wonderful performance!"

Lord Dunstable, meanwhile, sat absolutely silent, his hat on the back of his head, his attention fixed on his wife. As the group broke up, and the chairs were pushed back, he said in Doris' ear, "Isn't she an awfully clever woman, my wife?"

Before Doris could answer, she heard Lady Dunstable carelessly—but none the less peremptorily—inviting her women guests to see their rooms. Doris walked by her hostess' side towards the house. Every trace of animation and charm had now vanished from that lady's manner. She was as languid and monosyllabic as before, and Doris could only feel once again that while her clever husband was an eagerly welcomed guest, she herself could only expect to reckon as his appendage—a piece of family luggage.

Lady Dunstable threw open the door of a spacious bedroom. "No doubt, you will wish to rest till dinner," she said, severely. "And of course your maid will ask for what she wants." At the word *maid*, did Doris dream it, or was there a satiric gleam in the hard black eyes? "Pretender!" it seemed to say—and Doris' conscience admitted the charge.

And indeed the door had no sooner closed on Lady Dunstable when an agitated knock announced Jane.

She stood opposite her mistress in tears.

"Please, ma'am, I'll have to have an evening dress—or I can't go in to supper!"

"What on earth do you mean?" said Doris, staring at her.

"Every maid in this 'ouse ma'am, 'as got to dress for supper. The maids go in the 'ousekeeper's room, an' they've all on 'em got dresses V-shaped, or cut square, or something. This black dress, ma'am, wont do at all. I couldn't dream, ma'am, of goin' in different to the others!"

"You silly creature!" said Doris, springing up. "Look here, I'll lend you my spare blouse. You can turn it in at the neck, and wear my white scarf. You'll be as smart as any of them!"

And half laughing, half compassionate, she pulled her blouse out of the box, adjusted the white scarf to it herself, and sent the bewildered Jane about her business, after having shown her first how to unpack her mistress' modest belongings, and strictly charging her to return half an hour before dinner. "Of course I shall dress myself—but you may as well have a lesson."

THE girl went, and Doris was left stormily wondering why she had been such a fool as to bring her. Then Doris' sense of humor conquered, and her brow cleared. She went to the open window and stood looking over the park beyond. Sunset lay broad and rich over the wide stretches of grass, and the splendid oaks lifting their dazzling leaves to the purest of skies. The roses in the garden sent up their scent; there was a plashing of water from an invisible fountain; and the deer beyond the fence wandered in and out of the broad bands of shadow drawn across the park. Doris' young feet fidgeted under her. She longed to be out exploring the woods and the lake. Why was she immured in this stupid room, to which Lady Dunstable had conducted her, with a chill politeness which had said plainly enough, "Here you are, and here you stay, till dinner!"

"If I could only find a back-staircase," she thought, "I would soon be enjoying myself! Arthur, lucky wretch, said something about playing golf. No! There he is!"

And sure enough, on the farthest edge of the lawn going towards the park, she saw two figures walking—Lady Dunstable and Arthur! Deep in talk, of course, having the best of times, "While I am shut up here, safe—half-past six—on a glorious evening!" The reflection, however, was, on the whole, good-humored. She did not feel, as yet, either jealous or tragic. Some day, she supposed, if it was to be her lot to visit country houses, she would get used to



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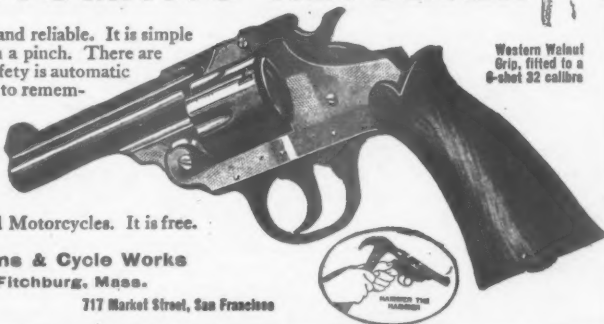
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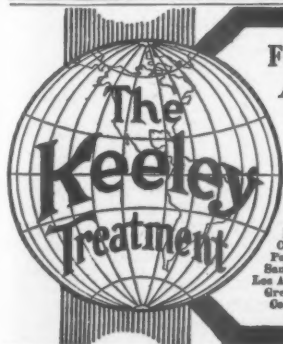
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their ways. For Arthur, of course, it was useful—perhaps necessary—to be put through his paces by a woman like Lady Dunstable. "And he can hold his own. But for me? I contribute nothing. I don't belong to them; they don't want me—and what use have I for them?"

HER meditations, however, were interrupted by a knock. On her saying "Come in," the door opened cautiously to admit the face of the substantial lady, Miss Field, to whom Doris had been introduced at the tea-table.

"Are you resting?" said Miss Field, "or only 'interned'?"

"Oh, please come in!" cried Doris. "I never was less tired in my life."

Miss Field entered and took the arm-chair that Doris offered her, fronting the window and the summer scene. Her face would have suited the Muse of Mirth, if any Muse is ever forty years of age. The small, up-turned nose and full red lips were always smiling; so were the eyes; and the fair skin and still golden hair, the plump figure and gay dress of flower-sprigged muslin, were all in keeping with the part.

"You have never seen my cousin before?" she inquired.

"Lady Dunstable? Is she your cousin?"

Miss Field nodded. "My first cousin. And I spend a great part of the year here, helping in different ways. Rachel can't do without me now, so I am able to keep her in order. Don't ever be shy with her! Don't ever let her think she frightens you! Those are the two indispensable rules here."

"I'm afraid I should break them," said Doris slowly. "She does frighten me—horribly!"

"Ah, well, you didn't show it; that's the chief thing. You know she's a much more human creature than she seems."

"Is she?" Doris' eyes pursued the two distant figures in the park.

"You'd think, for instance, that Lord Dunstable was just a cipher? Not at all. He's the real authority here, and when he puts his foot down, Rachel always gives in. But of course she's stood in the way of his career."

Doris shrank a little from these in-

discretions. But she could not keep her curiosity out of her eyes, and Miss Field smilingly answered it.

"She's absorbed him so! You see, he watches her all the time. She's like an endless play to him. He really doesn't care for anything else—he doesn't want anything else. Of course, they're very rich. But he might have done something in politics, if she hadn't been so much more important than he. And then, naturally, she's made enemies—powerful enemies. Her friends come here, her old cronies, the people who can put up with her. They're devoted to her. And the young people, the very modern ones, who think nice manners 'early Victorian,' and like her rudeness, they come for the sake of her cleverness. What do you think she did yesterday?"

Doris naturally could not help wishing to know.


"She took a fancy to ask a girl near here—the daughter of a clergyman—to come and join this Sunday party. She's always on the look-out for cleverness; she hunts it like a hound! Well, she met this young woman somewhere, and the girl impressed her—I can't say how. So yesterday morning she went over in her pony-carriage, broke in on the little rectory like a hurricane—of course, you know the people about here regard her as something semi-divine!—and told the girl she had come to take her back to Crosby Ledgers for the Sunday. So the poor child packed up, all in a flutter, and they set off together in the pony-carriage, six miles. And by the time they had gone four, Rachel had discovered she had made a mistake—that the girl wasn't clever, and would add nothing to the party. So she quietly told her that she was afraid, after all, the party wouldn't suit her. And then she turned the pony's head, and drove her straight home again!"

"Oh!" cried Doris, her cheeks red, her eyes aflame.

"Brutal, wasn't it?" said the other. "All the same, there are fine things in Rachel—very fine things. And in one point, she's the most vulnerable of women!"

"Her son?" Doris ventured.

Miss Field shrugged her shoulders:



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"He doesn't drink; he doesn't gamble; he doesn't spend money; he doesn't run away with other people's wives. He's just nothing—just incurably empty and idle. He comes here very little. His mother terrifies him. And since he was twenty-one, he has a little money of his own. He hangs about in studios and theaters. His mother doesn't know any of his friends. What she suffers—poor Rachel! She'd have given everything in the world for a brilliant son. But you can't wonder. She's like some strong plant that takes all the nourishment out of the ground, so that the plants near it starve. She can't help it. She doesn't mean to be a vampire!"

DORIS hardly knew what to say. Somehow, she wished the Vampire were not walking with Arthur! That, however, was not a sentiment easily communicable; and she was just turning it into something else when Miss Field said—abruptly—like some one coming to the real point:

"Does your husband like her?"

"Why, yes, of course!" stammered Doris. "She's been awfully kind to us about the lectures, and—he loves arguing with her."

"She loves arguing with *him*!" said Miss Field triumphantly. "She lives just for such half-hours as that she gave us on the lawn after tea—and all owing to him; he was so inspiring, so stimulating! Oh, you'll see; she'll take you up tremendously—if you want to be taken up!"

The smiling blue eyes looked gally into Doris' puzzled countenance. Evidently the speaker was much amused by the Meadows' situation—more amused than her sense of politeness allowed her to explain.

Doris was conscious of a vague resentment. "I'm afraid I don't see what Lady Dunstable will get out of me," she said, drily.

Miss Field raised her eyebrows: "Are you going then to let him come here alone? She'll be always asking! Rachel takes possession; she sticks like a limpet."

There was a pause. Then Miss Field added:

"You mustn't think it odd that I say these things about Rachel. I have to explain her to people. She's not like anybody else."

Doris did not quite see the necessity, but she kept the reflection to herself, and Miss Field passed lightly to the other guests: Sir Charles, a tame cat of the house, who quarreled with Lady Dunstable once a month, vowed he would never come near her again, and always reappeared; the Dean, who in return for a general submission, was allowed to scold her occasionally for her soul's health; the politicians whom she could not do without, who were therefore handled more gingerly than the rest; the military and naval men who loved Dunstable and put up with his wife for his sake; and the young people, nephews and nieces, and cousins, who liked an unconventional hostess without any foolish notions of chaperonage, and always enjoyed themselves famously at Crosby Ledgers.

"Now then," said Miss Field, rising at last, "I think you have the *carte du pays*; and there they are—coming back." She pointed to Meadows and Lady Dunstable, crossing the lawn. "Whatever you do, hold your own! If you don't want to play games, don't play them. If you want to go to church to-morrow, go to church. Lady Dunstable, of course, is a heathen. And now, perhaps, you might *really* rest!"

"SUCH a jolly walk!" said Meadows, entering his wife's room flushed with exercise and pleasure. "The place is divine, and really Lady Dunstable is uncommonly good talk. Hope you haven't been dull, dear?"

Doris replied, laughing, that Miss Field had taken pity on what would otherwise have been solitary confinement, and that now it was time to dress. Meadows kissed her absently, and with his head evidently full of his walk, went to his dressing-room. When he reappeared, it was to find Doris attired in a little black gown, with which he was already too familiar. She saw at once the dissatisfaction in his face.

"I can't help it!" she said, with emphasis. "I did my best with it, Arthur,

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but I'm not a genius at dressmaking. Never mind. Nobody will take any notice of me!"

He quite crossly rebuked her. She really must spend more on her dress. It was unseemly—absurd. She looked as nice as anybody when she was properly got up.

"Well, don't buy any more copper coal-scuttles!" she said slyly, as she straightened his tie, and dropped a kiss on his chin. "Then we'll see."

They went down to dinner, and on the staircase, Meadows turned to say to his wife in a lowered voice:

"Lady Dunstable wants me to go to them in Scotland—for two or three weeks. I dare say I could do some work."

"Oh, does she?" said Doris.

WHAT perversity drove Lady Dunstable during the evening and the Sunday that followed to match every attention that was lavished on Arthur Meadows by some slight to his wife, will never be known. But the fact was patent. Throughout the diversions or occupations of the forty-eight hours' visit, Mrs. Meadows was either ignored, snubbed, or contradicted. Only Arthur Meadows, indeed, measuring himself with delight for the first time against some of the keenest brains in the country, failed to see it. His blindness allowed Lady Dunstable to run a somewhat dangerous course unchecked. She risked alienating a man whom she particularly wished to attract; she excited a passion of antagonism in Doris' generally equable breast, and was quite aware of it. Yet she followed her whim; and by the Sunday evening there existed between the great lady and her guest a state of veiled war, in which the strokes were by no means always to the advantage of Lady Dunstable.

Doris, for instance, with other guests, expressed a wish to attend morning service on Sunday at a famous cathedral some three miles away. Lady Dunstable firmly announced that everybody who wished to go to church would go to the village church within the park, for which alone carriages would be provided. Then Doris and Sir Charles

combined, and walked to the cathedral, three miles there and three miles back—to the huge delight of the other and more docile guests. Sunday evening, sure enough, was devastated by what were called "games" at Crosby Ledgers—"Gad, if I wouldn't sooner go in for the Indian Civil again!" said Sir Charles. Doris, with the most ingratiating manner, begged to be excused. Lady Dunstable bit her lip and, *à propos de bottes*, launched some observations on the need of coöperation in society. It was shirking, refusing to take a hand, to do one's best—false shame, indeed—that ruined English society, and English talk. Let everybody take a lesson from the French! After which, the lists were opened, so to speak, and Lady Dunstable, Meadows, the Dean, and about half the young people, produced elegant pieces of translation, astounding copies of impromptu verse, essays in all the leading styles of the day, and riddles by the score. The Home Secretary, who had been lassoed by his hostess, escaped, towards the middle of the ordeal, and wandered sadly into a further room, where Doris sat chatting with Lord Dunstable. He was carrying various slips of paper in his hand, and asked her distractedly if she could throw any light on the question, "Why is Lord Salisbury like a poker?"

"I can't think of anything to say," he said helplessly, "except 'because they are both upright!' And here's another: 'Why is the Pope like a thermometer?' I did see some light on that!" His countenance cheered a little. "Would this do? 'Because both are higher in Italy than in England.' Not very good—but I must think of something."

Doris put her wits to his. Between them they polished the riddle; and by the time it was done, the Home Secretary had begun to find Meadows' little wife, whose existence he had not noticed hitherto, more agreeable than Lady Dunstable's table with its racked countenances, and its too ample supply of pencils and paper—a deadly crime! When Lady Dunstable, at midnight, swept through the rooms to gather her guests for bed, she cast a withering glance on Doris and her companion.

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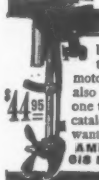
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"So you despised our little amusements?" she said, as she handed Mrs. Meadows her candle.

"I wasn't worthy of them," smiled Doris, in reply.

"WELL, I call that a delightful visit!" said Meadows, as the train next morning pulled out of the Crosby Ledgers station, for London. "I feel freshened up all over."

Doris looked at him with rather mocking eyes, but said nothing. She fully recognized, however, that Arthur would have been an ungrateful wretch if he had not enjoyed it. Lady Dunstable had been, so to speak, at his feet, and all her little court had taken their cue from her. He had been flattered, drawn out, and shown off to his heart's content, and had been most naturally and humanly happy. "And I," thought Doris, with sudden repentance, "was just a spiky, horrid little toad! What was wrong with me?" She was still searching, when Meadows said reproachfully:

"I thought, darling, you might have taken a little more trouble to make friends with Lady Dunstable. However, that'll be all right. I told her of course we should be delighted to go to Scotland."

"Arthur!" cried Doris, aghast. "Three weeks! I couldn't, Arthur! Don't ask me!"

"And pray, why?" he angrily inquired.

"Because—oh, Arthur, don't you understand? She is a man's woman. She took a particular dislike to me, and I just had to be stubborn and thorny to get on at all. I'm awfully sorry, but I

couldn't stay with her, and I'm certain you wouldn't be happy either."

"I should be perfectly happy," said Meadows, with vehemence. "And so would you, if you weren't so critical and censorious. Anyway,"—his Jove-like mouth shut firmly,—*"I have promised."*

"You couldn't promise for me!" cried Doris, holding her head very high.

"Then you'll have to let me go without you?"

"Which of course was what you swore not to do!" she said, provokingly.

"I thought my wife was a reasonable woman. Lady Dunstable rouses all my powers—she gives me ideas which may be most valuable. It is to the interest of both of us that I should keep up my friendship with her."

"Then keep it up," said Doris, her cheeks aflame. "But you won't want me to help you, Arthur."

He cried out that it was only pride and conceit that made her behave so. In her heart of hearts, Doris mostly agreed with him. But she wouldn't confess it, and it was presently understood between them that Meadows would duly accept the Dunstables' invitation for August, and that Doris would stay behind.

After this, Doris looked firmly out of the window for the rest of the journey, and could not at all conceal from herself that she had never felt more miserable in her life. The only person in the trio who returned to the Kensington house, entirely happy, was Jane, who spent the greater part of the day in describing to Martha, the cook-general, the glories of Crosby Ledgers and her own genteel appearance in Mrs. Meadows' blouse.

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EMPTY POCKETS—by Rupert Hughes

Continued from page 80 of this issue.

abroad again. But evidently not, for where *did* you get that gown? It has a tight skirt. You ought to be ashamed to be seen in it."

"I got it in Paris."

"Yes, I saw it there, and I wouldn't let them lift it off the hanger."

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"Mrs. Shenstone!" he shrieked. "Get that Callot out of the window. Miss Schuyler wants to try it on."

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Mrs. Shenstone hurried away with the frock, and it returned on the form of Maryla, who came in as undulantly as a footless mermaid. Muriel greeted her with a flattering affection and a shattering query:

"Miss Sokalska! I'm so glad to see you. And you're prettier than ever. But I heard you had left here—had come into a lot of money. Did you? I hope you didn't lose it! Did you?"

Maryla flushed. Dutilh tried to intervene. He turned to Maryla. "I told Miss Schuyler about the money when you first left." He turned to Muriel: "But you know how those things are. The amount was greatly exaggerated. So she came back. But how do you like the gown?"

"I like it enormously on Miss Sokalska," said Muriel. "The green goes with her hair wonderfully. It's like patina on an old bronze."

"Then it would suit you to perfection," said Dutilh. "Your coloring is much the same."

"Oh, Meesteh Dutilh!" Maryla pro-

tested, shocked at his venturing to equal a model with a customer.

"The honor is all mine," said Muriel.

"Will you have the gown?" said Dutilh. "Walk away, my dear, and let her see the back. A dream, eh?"

"It belongs on Miss Sokalska," said Muriel. "I'd never dare to wear it now."

This was terrible. This would never do. A model who scared off purchasers! But Muriel said:

"Will you let me buy it for you, Miss Sokalska? I meant to bring you something from abroad, but I—I forgot."

Maryla was in a panic. She had had too much of beautiful gowns. She had tried to live down to the others, but she said:

"Thank you, please, I could not live up to such a dress. I am a working girl, not a fine lady."

"All the same, you ought to have it," Muriel grumbled. She disliked being thwarted in her impulses. She felt that if she had Maryla alone she might succeed. So she said:

"Well, I'll take the gown, though it's too good for me—if you'll send it home this afternoon."

"It will be there in an hour," said Dutilh, waving Maryla away. Muriel called her back:

"I want to talk with you about everything, Miss Sokalska. Wont you come up and have a cup of tea with me when you leave here?"

Maryla hesitated, but Dutilh clinched the affair:

"She can take the gown to your house herself, and we'll call it a day's work. When do you want her?"

"At five?"

"At five."

III

MARYLA sat in the same majestic chair in the Schuyler home, drinking tea from the same service with the same ritual as at first. But she had lived

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through æons of experience since then. When Muriel had dismissed the servants with a toss of the head, she exclaimed: "Now tell me all about yourself."

Maryla smiled wretchedly. That was a large order, an impossible order, too, if one had the time and the memory and the endurance. Maryla had come to the Schuyler home in a mood embittered with realization of the hateful fact that Muriel was in a sense to blame for all that had befallen her. She wanted to pour out, with the wrath of an ancient prophet, her horror of the ways of these rich Moabites in whose tribe a Perry Merithew could prosper.

She had heard that Muriel knew the sleek monster, was friends with him. She wanted to accuse Muriel of being as bad as herself, as bad as Merithew.

But somehow hospitality has always exerted a mystic power of disarmament. Maryla had broken Muriel's wafers and tasted her salt, or better yet, her sugar. And her response to Muriel's eager concern was not wrath but love. She had longed for one thing more than revenge and that was expression. She had famished for one listener. And now she had found one, and she felt that there would be deep wells of sympathy to her need.

She told her story in her own way, rather giving herself the worst of it, seeing her innocent motives through the ugly murk of their consequences. And she called Perry Merithew "Meesteh Brown," as she had called him to the janitor and her maid.

Muriel listened with breathlessness. She had heard and read of these things in novels and stories and sermons and newspapers, in villages, countrysides, cities, American and foreign. But she had never heard a history of the sort from the lips of experience.

Strangely, she did not feel disdain or repugnance. She did not feel soiled by the testimony. The dirt of life is fertile and it washes off, and whoso is afraid to dig in it is not likely to understand the soil from which he springs or the field where he grows.

WHEN Maryla told how she had longed to stab her betrayer with the hat-pin he gave her, she drew it

from her hat. Muriel took it from her and studied it. Its claw-gripped amethyst and its keen steel length were as dreadful as if it had done the deed it was meant for.

She put it down on the tea table: it was still dangerous, romantic with menace.

As Maryla went on with her chronicle, and told how she had gone back to her home but had been unable to breathe in its fetid atmosphere, she found in Muriel's eyes and in her little gasps of comment all imaginable comfort—until she told how she had given her baby to the city. Then Muriel, who had never borne a child, felt all the primal antipathy for such a deed and could not mask her aversion.

Maryla cowered before the unwitting condemnation. She did not defend herself, but in a dull fury heaped reproaches on her own wickedness.

Her self-revilement forced Muriel to be her advocate.

"Oh, I'm not blaming you for what you did. It was love that made you, and it was something to be proud of because you could love so well, and endure so much so patiently. The past is over and done. It's the future that counts. And you mustn't—you simply mustn't—leave your baby to an institution. You'd never forgive yourself. You'd never know where it was. Even if it were dead, you wouldn't know, but its ghost would seem to haunt you. And if it were alive, you would think that you heard it calling to you for help. You can't deny your child the most precious thing in life—a mother to go to."

These were not new ideas to Maryla. She had dwelt with them ever since she consigned her child to oblivion. Muriel opened the old wounds and broke the sluices of tears anew. Maryla as she wept could only plead.

"But how should I support my baby? Where can I work and keep my baby? Can I pay for somebody to take care of the baby when I am away?"

Muriel was ready for this.

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Muriel recoiled from this ugliness. "The dog! the beast! Well, then, you and I will take care of the baby without him. He has no right to it. The first thing is for you to make sure that the baby hasn't been given away to anybody else. You go claim the baby and—"

Muriel's father came into the room. He had had a stormy day—an old-school capitalist fighting the impertinent claims of the new-school publicists who were trying to make him personally and criminally responsible for a train wreck on one of his railroads.

He was in a rage and hungry for his dinner. He was curt to Maryla when Muriel reminded him that he had met her. He was curt to Muriel, and even she could not overawe him when he was hungry. She promised to be dressed in a jiffy, and she reluctantly bundled Maryla out of the house, saying:

"You get your baby, and I'll be responsible for it. And I'll see your father and mother again, and make everything as right as I can."

Muriel was a member of the new school and believed in everybody's being responsible for everybody else.

Maryla tried to stammer her thanks, but Muriel took her in her arms and kissed her and did what she did not do for richer callers—went to the door with her.

MARYLA out on the sidewalk nearly lost her hat in a gust of evening breeze. She remembered that she had left her hat-pin on the tea-table. She was afraid to go back for it. She was glad to be rid of it. She turned toward the Foundling Hospital with a more peaceful soul.

The servants, finding the hat-pin when they took away the tea service, supposed it to be Muriel's, and sent it up to her room, where a housemaid put it in her pincushion without remark.

Muriel was too busy to be spoken to. Her own maid was in the country, and everything was at sixes and sevens. She did not wear a hat when she met her father in the hall, trying not to breathe fast from her whirlwind change of costumes, and trying to make him think that he had kept her waiting.

They dined at the hotel because their own kitchen-crew was in the country. All the way down in the car, Jacob was spluttering about his business troubles.

"You'll forget 'em when they strike up the *Lame Duck*," said Muriel. "And you mustn't spoil your dinner with talking shop, for your nice young doctor is to dine with us."

"My nice young doctor?" said Jacob. "Who's my young doctor?"

"Clinton Worthing," Muriel simpered with the ultra demurity of an old actress.

"My nice young doctor!" sniffed Jacob. "Well, I'm glad Winnie Nicolls is to be with us to-night to act as an antidote to our nice young doctor."

"Winnie Nicolls!" Muriel gasped.

"Yes, he's come on the Board now, and I asked him to join us. He's got his Aunt Abigail in tow for me to dance with. You can tell your mother about her mysteriously, and maybe we can make her so jealous that she'll take up dancing too. She needs it. We'll get your—my nice young doctor to prescribe it. He can call it maxage."

CHAPTER XXXVII

IT was the season when over New York there seems to stand a demon of heat beating the town with a flail. During the day the only stir in the air comes from the softened pavement, where he pounds up the dust. Usually, though not always, he rests at sundown, and breezes come in like brooks of salvation.

This was such a night. On the roofs of the multitudinous towers that climb and climb, the lucky folk were gathered, eating or dancing, listening to music or watching the dancers. Hordes of them were visitors, but there were armies of husbands whose wives were in more seasonable places. And there were a few of the wealthy who had been kept in town or called back on some of the interests that made up their wealth.

Pet Bettany and her mother were spending the summer in town. They had no husband and father to leave at a desk, nobody to send them funds. The hard times had almost ended their revenue. Everybody had felt that by the



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fall of the year or by the first of the new year, prosperity would begin again. The Bettany women wondered if they could live that long. They resolved to rent their summer home, and hide in their town house. They could pretend that they had been to Europe—or anywhere where their friends had not been.

Even summer homes were not easy to rent in the black year of 1914. The sum the Bettanys finally had to accept barely kept them in food and forbade excursions.

When Pet had seen Merithew at the polo game she had coerced him into a luncheon rendezvous. She had threatened him, but all she wanted was to be taken to some bright place, away from the home-cave with the quarreling, unpaid servants and her reminiscent mother.

Perry kept the engagement because he feared that Pet was planning something new against Muriel. He went to the Vanderbilt prepared for a battle of bluff. But Pet astounded him by turning up in a pathetic humor. She hurt his appetite with the sorrowful story of her privations, and she moved him almost to tears by the ravenous way she ate the insubstantial decorative things she ordered.

Perry felt like a philanthropist at a newsboy's banquet. He said amiably:

"Dancing much, Pet?"

"Dancing?" said Pet with her mouth full in her grand old plebeian Russian empress way. "Who's going to take me to a dance? I've been tempted to go out and hire one of these one-stepping haberdashers to dance with me, but I haven't quite had the nerve, or the price."

Perry thought hard, and a humane whim moved him to celebrate the reconciliation with his quondam favorite and later enemy.

"What would you say if I asked you to take dinner to-night with me and dance the evening out?"

"I'd call for some aromatic ammonia before I fainted."

"If you promise not to faint, I'll take you."

"I swear. Oh, Perry, old dove, prosperity is here. It's here!"

"Does your mother have to come

along?" said Perry anxiously. "Of course, I love Mrs. T. J. B., but—"

"Say no more, Perry. Let Mother darling row her own hoe, or whatever they say."

When Perry called for Pet that evening he was surprised to see how fine she looked.

She was so gorgeous that he decided to take her to the Ritz-Carlton for dinner. They went up to the dining-room on the roof, and rejoiced in its cool richnesses. Under the striped canopy great baskets of flowers hung in profusion. And the night air streamed in across a parapet of plants in bloom. It played about with the hilarity of a jester in a throne room, bent the flowers double and whisked impishly at the light skirts of the women who entered.

Pet's spirits rose higher and higher, and Perry ordered more than his usual frugal fare, for Pet was hungry—also thirsty. She flung his cocktail as well as her own between her riant lips. And she said:

"Make it champagne, old thing, wont you? That's the boy! And give me a cigarette."

Perry made it champagne—a best one. It came so dry that Pet pretended to blow the dust off it. Perry, though he drank hardly a drop, began to feel the conviviality of the occasion, and people at other tables were glancing with amusement or displeasure at him and at Pet, whose strong voice was not muffled with gaiety.

And then Winnie Nicolls had to come in, with some elderly woman in convoy. Pet waved to him with an eagerness that miffed Perry. She beckoned him to come over from the large table where he had been seated. But he bowed low and indicated his companion as an excuse for staying put.

Pet grew sullen: "Who's the old hen he's with? And why is he afraid to let her see him with me? Is it because I'm smoking?"

"I don't know—three times," said Perry.

"Am I flushed? Am I talking too loud?"

"Yes."

"Well, what do I care?" she said

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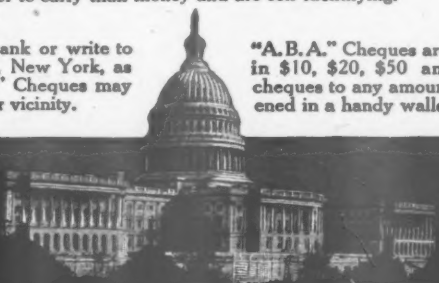
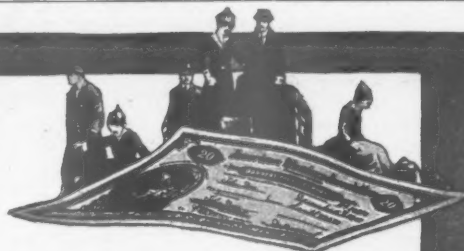
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louder still. Then she saw that Perry's face was brightening suddenly. She faced about. Muriel Schuyler was coming in with her father and some young man.

Perry was disgusted at being caught out with Pet on one of her bad days, but he decided to put on a bold front. He started to rise and go to Muriel. But Pet put her hand on his arm and set him down ridiculously.

It was Winnie Nicolls that rose and motioned to Muriel, and she turned in his direction.

Pet saw this too, and it inflamed her further. Perry tried to lift her hand from his arm, and pleaded:

"Let me go, please. I must speak to Miss Schuyler a moment."

She would not release him. She mumbled:

"Muriel Schuyler can't have all the men. If Winnie can't leave his hen, you can't leave me."

"I'll only be a moment, please," Perry urged.

But Pet had already passed the danger point. Her cigarette caught her notice: the ashes were about to topple. A sudden vicious inspiration led her to flick them in Perry's eye.

Staring at Muriel, he did not see them coming. They filled his eye with pain and tears and his heart with rage.

"So sorry!" Pet laughed. "Go on to your Muriel now, if you want to."

He could not go. He spent some awkward moments bathing his eye with his handkerchief wetted in his glass of water. His temper was gone beyond control. He was kept winking, and he hardly dared look at Muriel. He reviled Pet in a low tone, and she answered him with such blattance that the waiters were in distress.

Perry saw through his inflamed eyes that Muriel was wondering, and her father annoyed; Winnie Nicolls was disgusted, and his aunt from out of town half amazed and half delighted at this confirmation of her opinion of New York manners and morals.

As soon as the miserable dinner could be served and disposed of, Perry got Pet away on the pretext of an impatience to dance. When he had helped her into

a taxicab, he whispered her address to the driver.

When Pet realized that he had brought her home, she made a magnificent scene, and Perry was not sure that she would not strike him in the face.

To the delight of the chauffeur, she stood at her front door and threatened Perry Merithew with vengeance dire and memorable. Perry went back to the Ritz-Carlton to make his apologies, but Muriel and her company had gone somewhere else to dance. He went to half the roofs in town, before he reached the one where they had been. And by that time they had been and gone.

II

WORTHING had been hardly more comfortable through the dinner than Merithew. He had not been yoked to a woman whose good breeding had shown poor results. But he had been encircled with money. For Jacob Schuyler was rich, Winnie Nicolls was richer, and his aunt, Mrs. Adams of Boston, was one of the plutocrats of New England.

After the dinner they adjourned to the Biltmore to dance. Jacob and Mrs. Adams made sorry progress. Both had been learning the new steps, but they had not learned the same ones, and the result was more debate than dance. When Jacob sidled, Abigail dipped; and when Abigail pirouetted, Jacob went Castle-walking.

Muriel gave Worthing the first dance, and he rejoiced till he wondered if she had not done it to tantalize Nicolls. Furthermore, Jacob stopped them in mid-ecstasy and cut in, offering to trade partners. He wrested his daughter from Worthing's arms and bounded away like a galloping buffalo, for Muriel knew his rhythm. Worthing had nothing to do but offer Abigail the hollow of his arms, and to his horror she found him so congenial a dancer that she required an encore. Then it was Nicolls that laughed.

Jacob was like a boy. He had got back the dancing fever, and beside the joy of the speed and the music and the lilt there was the added blessing of well-won sleep and the welcome testimony of the bathroom scales every few mornings



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that he had made one pound of flesh grow where two had grown before.

And so, being a monopolist by nature, he was perfectly willing to keep Muriel from the two young men and leave them to alternate as wall-flower or as first aid to Abigail.

When Jacob grew tired it was always time to go home. He tired early, since he rose early, and he was soon telling Muriel to bid her guests good-night.

Winnie Nicolls tried to make an engagement with Muriel for the next day, but she said that she would be in the country. He suggested the following afternoon, but she said that her father would be motoring over to Long Beach for a swim and more dancing. Winnie suggested the still following day, but Muriel had an engagement in town at a most important charity meeting with a committee of which Mrs. Perry Merithew was chairman. Winnie gave up in despair.

Worthing made a note of that Long Beach hint and resolved to happen to be there. The ocean still belonged to the public, and a rich man in a bathing suit was no better than a poor man unless he were the better swimmer. And Worthing rather prided himself on his natation.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

PEOPLE who go down to the sea in bathing suits alter all civilization. Everything suffers a sea change. They doff the habits that have been drilled into them from infancy, the very principles of morality. Whether they own their own bathing costumes, or rent them, they are rather putting on a domino, than taking off a mask. Their own skins and limbs are a masquerade. They check at the office their valuables, write their names on them, and reclaim them later, saying:

"Give me back my modesty, my dignity, my pride. I left with you a lively sense of the importance of concealing my ankles and knees, and a complete set of prudish ideals and discreet behaviors."

Imagine the horror of a lady who found that she had lost her check or got that of some light person, or learned

that her valuables had been mislaid or given away to somebody else by mistake! Imagine Mrs. Grundy coming back wet and animal, and finding that she would have to return to town as she had just come up the beach! Ponder the astounding fact that if she were to saunter along the boardwalk in the garb she wore on the sand a foot away, she would ruin her reputation for life. In most of the seaside colonies, she would be arrested if she went to her cottage a hundred yards distant without an enveloping mantle about her.

But on the strip of free country along the water's edge she will not be criticised, though she stroll or sprawl or run or pose in the suds, or cling to a rope and bounce up and down in a jostle of total strangers. Astounding and bewildering truth that one may not do in one crowded place what one may do in another! O times! O morals!

The partially and insecurely costumed faun next to Mrs. Grundy may be her minister, and only yesterday he may have delivered a scorching Jeremiad against the indecencies of the modern fashions, the sensualities of the ballroom or the Babylonian horrors of musical comedy.

It is hard for us to understand the Roman Saturnalia of three days, though we have three months of it. Inconsistency has never had anything to do with virtue and never will. Whatever everybody does is right.

Yet the scandalous are the most easily scandalized. And this hilariously depraved multitude, a glimpse of whose unashamed persons would have set Cotton Mather or even Roger Williams to calling on heaven for a shower of brimstone, was itself aghast at the newest depravity, because it was new.

In the summer of 1914 the dancing mania took an amphibious form. A number of half clad citizens not content with walking or running or sitting or lying supine or prone along the beach, actually took to dancing together. This was the post-ultimate adventure. This was, as the Irish put it, "beyond the beyonds."

But the strongest language that could be devised was already exhausted in denouncing the tango, and before that

Imagine the terror of a bride who has discovered that her husband is a thief! What would she do? What could she do?



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the turkey-trot, the waltz, the polka and the minuet.

Those dances had waxed and waned in popularity with no regard whatsoever to the names they were called; they waxed and waned like other public whims, solely according to the law of novelty and fatigue. And the only moral seems to be that one should save a superlative or two for a rainy day.

EVEN Perry Merithew gasped at the first sight of the beach trotters. He had motored over to Long Beach according to the popular program, for a swim, followed by a dancing tea, followed by a dancing dinner and an evening of dancing at the Trouville, then a motor ride back to town or to some Long Island home.

Perry left his mufti in the bathhouse, emerged in the legal minimum of bathing suit and ran into the small surf, dived through the first waves and played dolphin awhile: then he went ashore, and promenaded his powerful frame, letting the sun dry him so that the sea might wet him again. A band in a pavilion was booming dance tunes to whose key and meter the waves paid no heed.

Perry walked into a little galaxy of couples dancing on the well sanded floor of the beach. They were not very nice people, of course, but then the first people who take up fashions, sciences, and religions never are.

Perry enjoyed the rare luxury of being shocked by the exhibition. He denounced it to the nearest bystander. Then, on the opposite side of the wall of spectators, he saw Aphra Shaler. She had come to Long Beach under the auspices of a man so helpless with fat that he resembled a Japanese day balloon—one of those strange bloats that have hands and legs affixed. His very appearance in a bathing suit was an affront.

Aphra was very becomingly costumed in such garb as an overgrown doll might have worn in swimming. Perry did not recognize her at first because she had redecorated her hair. The heap of copper wire was a pile of ashen threads. She looked so pretty that he forgave

her the moneys she had buncoed him out of with her ingenious eyes so prompt to tears.

Aphra found him so pretty that she also forgave him and forgot; forgave Perry the moneys he had lately refused her, and forgot her escort entirely. She caracoled to Perry's side, squeezed his arm and murmured:

"Hello, Per." Aphra was one of those who must have always a nickname for the nickname.

"Hello," said Perry.

"Dance?" said she.

"No, thanks," said he.

"Please."

"No. Thanks!"

"Where's the harm?"

"Where's the fun?"

"Try it just once—for old sake's sake."

He shook his head. She persisted.

"I dare you to."

Perry accepted the challenge. Aphra stepped into his arms, and they stepped out: the band was playing a hesitation waltz. Aphra managed to keep from treading on Perry's bare feet, and there was a peculiar exhilaration in the open air, the quaint dare-deviltry of the dance.

"What's happened to your hair?" he said.

"It needed a new coat of paint so I tried this shade for a change yesterday. Like it?"

"Immensely."

Aphra was overjoyed. She paid no further heed to her original sponsor.

The next music was a maxixe. They danced that together. Then they ran into the ocean for a swim, then came out and danced again. There was something primeval about it—something Polynesian.

CLINTON WORTHING had come early to the beach in the hope of surprising Muriel. He had swum and basked and swum again, but she had not arrived. He joined the spectators around the dancers. The dancing revolted him—him whom such appalling things did not offend!

He watched the infatuated dervishes awhile, then turned away. He almost



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fell over an umbrella, and sent it skirling aside.

When he hastened to recover it, he found before him and beneath him the great Mrs. Schuyler, squat on the sand like a sultana. She was not in bathing togs, and Worthing felt as if he had wandered out of his bath-room into a drawing-room.

But Susan Schuyler was not shocked. She smiled and said:

"Sit down, wont you?"

He dropped like an invited Turk.

Susan explained:

"I'm afraid to go in to-day. My husband and my daughter are getting ready now. I used to enjoy the surf. I used to swim far out and dive from high places and all that, but now—but now—"

It was hard to imagine that she had once been slim and lithe as any of these nymphs. It was hard to imagine that Muriel would one day be seated buxomly perhaps on the same divan of sand and speaking so of her own daughter....

"Hello."

Worthing looked up. Muriel and her father were standing over them, smiling down. Muriel was swaddled up in a loose cloak. Jacob, the Titan of business, was bare-legged, bare-armed, bare-footed. He made a fine figure of a man of age.

Muriel expressed great surprise at seeing Worthing. He was glad to feel that it was mingled with delight. He rose to his feet and blushed, and she blushed too.

"Come on," he said. "I'll race you to the float."

Muriel had put up her hands to throw off her cloak, when Perry Merithew, dancing with Aphra, whirled her way.

Perry recognized Muriel before she did him.

As soon as he saw her, he flung Aphra off with the curtest of "Pardons." Aphra saw him greeting Muriel with an homage that was evident in the back of his neck. She was as angry as Worthing.

"We're just going into the water," said Muriel.

"So am I," said Perry.

"We're going to race to the float," said Muriel.

"I'll bet you can beat me," said Perry.

"Come on, Clinton," Muriel cried, and they ran, splashing through the low froth, sidling through the mid-waves and diving through the breakers.

Worthing put all his mettle into his Australian crawl and was happy to find that he was first to the float by half the distance, till he realized that the canny Perry was hanging back and companioning Muriel. This race was not to the swift. Merithew was an excellent swimmer and a neat and graceful diver. But he took care not to exploit his gifts so much that he lost sight of Muriel.

Worthing could not shake him off, and he did not enjoy competing for Muriel's attention. When Jacob came puffing out and turned the crowd of three into a convention, Worthing gave up. Besides, he really had a patient whom he had secured through the absence of another doctor, and he did not wish to lose by his own.

So he told Muriel good-by. She warmed his blue soul with an invitation:

"I just remembered. I may go in town this evening after dinner and spend the night at home so that I can be up bright and early in the morning. Are you busy this evening?"

Worthing's heart grew heavy enough to sink him. The Doctor Eccleston whose assistant he was had mapped out that evening for a round of visits with him, including an examination of Happy Hanigan's condition.

"I'm terribly sorry," said Muriel.

"Not half so sorry as I am," said Worthing and swam away like a disconsolate shark.

Perry Merithew was not saddened at all. He dared not invite Muriel to entrust her evening to him, because her father was within earshot, and would not go away. But Perry made his own resolves.

When the three went ashore at last, and bade him good-by, he found Aphra Shaler waiting for him. She was virulent with rage.

"How dared you throw me over like that?" she stormed. "One minute you're dancing with me; the next you chuck me and never come back. If I could have

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swum that far, I'd have come out there and scratched your eyes out—and hers too. Whyn't you introduce me to that Schuyler brat?"

"She's particular whom she meets," said Perry.

"Not very, when she sits out there on the float showin' off her shape and swimmin' round with you. I guess she's like those other fast millionaires, all right."

Perry's eyes blazed. His voice was low but his wrath was evident. "Leave Miss Schuyler out of it—do you hear? I wont allow a woman like you to mention her name to me—understand?"

"Oh, I see!" Aphra sneered. "You're as far gone as that. Well, you can have her for all I care. But you've got to get me my dinner first and get me back to town. I was fool enough to listen to your con. voice again, and my gentleman friend got sore and went home. I'm stranded."

Somehow this amused Perry. He said, "I haven't a cent on me."

And he walked back to the bathhouse. When he was dressed he took care to escape without providing for Aphra's return. He felt that she could take care of herself. He was going back into the company of the good.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WHEN Muriel reached her home she rang the bell several times without response. She began to search in her befuddled hand-bag for the latchkey she had been allotted at the time when she began coming home at all hours from dances. The Schuylers, being merciful people, had mercy on their servants. Muriel had just found the key when the door was opened by the second man.

In place of revealing the usual hospitality of his smile at the sight of her, his face dropped. She paused on the stairway to say:

"Oh, Kane."

"Yes, Miss."

"You looked sad when you saw me."

"Oh, no, Miss."

"Oh, yes, Kane. Have I broken up anything. Were you going to have a little party here?"

"Not here—oh, no—no indeed."

"Where then?"

"It really doesn't matter, Miss."

"But I don't want to spoil any fun you planned. You don't get much, staying in town this horrible weather."

"Well, thank you, we were going to take a little ride to Coney Island and back, owing to the heat—but it isn't necessary."

"Oh, yes, it is! I insist."

"We couldn't very well leave you alone in this big house, Miss—though, of course, Mrs. Lunney would be here and the night watchman patrols the block, but—oh, no, thank you."

"Run right along. I'm going to bed early, anyway. Just see that I'm called at eight, and send my breakfast up at half-past, for I've got an important meeting at ten."

"It's very good of you, Miss, but really—"

"Good-by."

Muriel's own maid was at the country home, and a housemaid came up to supply her place, but Muriel ordered her to go about her pleasure.

Mrs. Lunney stopped in on her heavy pilgrimage to the attic to ask if she could be of service, but Muriel bade her good-night. She tried to read, but the light drew wire-voiced mosquitoes, suicidal moths, and beetles that blundered about like random bullets. She sat in the dark by the window, gazing into the shadowy demesne of Central Park and watching the passage of the motor busses, their upper decks filled like window boxes with a swaying foliage of humanity—prisoners in town hunting an artificial breeze in the speed of the bus and enjoying automobiling at the wholesale rate of ten cents for each five miles.

No amount of wealth could persuade a zephyr to blow through even the Schuyler windows. The air was singularly lifeless, and Muriel envied the lucky ones who could go bus-riding. If she had not known that Doctor Worthing was otherwise engaged, she would have dared to ask him to take her out. She felt peculiarly forlorn, greatly tempted to use the franchise of the American girl, and go by herself.



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So far as she was concerned, New York was an abandoned farm; the passers-by were wraiths merely. And then the telephone rang.

"There's something in telepathy after all," she thought as she hastened to it, feeling a kind of gratitude to the rubber oracle. "Clinton felt my spirit messages at last."

She greeted space with a cordial "Hello," and space greeted her with another.

"Hello. Is Miss Schuyler there?"

Her voice grew somber with disappointment.

"This is Miss Schuyler."

"How are you? This is—"

"Oh, hello, Mr. Merithew. And how are you?"

"Crazy with the heat. What are you doing this evening?"

"Very much nothing."

"Will you take a little motor ride with me?"

"Indeed not."

"I'm horribly lonesome."

"You're not the only one."

"Then why not come along and save two lives?"

"It wouldn't be quite respectable."

"There's nobody in town to know. That makes it respectable."

"Crowds are going by on stages."

"Then let's get on a stage and ride. It's unutterably proper—twenty chaparrons on every bus. Besides, the only people in town except us are strangers from the far West. We might as well be masked."

She resented this, but it reassured her; and after a little further parley she answered:

"All right, I'll sneak out and meet you at the corner. You go there and wait. I'll watch for you from here, and when you're there I'll come."

"Fine for you! I'll not be a minute. I'm only a few blocks away—at a drug-store."

She felt that she ought not to go, and that made it more interesting. She tiptoed about with delicious stealth and found her hat in the dark. She took two hat-pins from the cushion on her dressing table. One of them was Maryla's claw-gripped amethyst.

II

SHE found Perry Merithew waiting, and they giggled like runaway children. They hailed the first northbound 'bus and climbed to the upper deck. They found two seats together, and the motion of the stage swept their faces with a benison of fresh air. They talked of nothing much but the tyranny of the weather, all the way up, and they kept their places when the stage turned back. When Muriel suggested getting out at her home, Perry begged her to complete the voyage to Washington Square. She consented.

By and by the comfort of the high, cool voyage affected her as happiness usually did. It made her eager to share it. She began to talk of her poor who could not know such luxury:

"It seems a crime for us to have so much and they so little. All these palaces and churches locked up and this street empty and those poor souls crowded into such stifling hovels."

"Are you going to become one of those ghastly socialists who don't believe in letting anybody have anything because everybody can't have everything? And after all, we haven't so much. A man can only wear one suit of clothes at a time—eat one meal at a time; and the less he eats the happier he is, no matter how rich he is."

"But to toil and slave the way they do!"

"There's no unhappiness like being idle," he answered glibly. But even she caught that fallacy:

"They have the idleness too—thousands and thousands are out of work. And idleness means to them that they can't even get their one meal at a time."

"Oh, I fancy there's just as much real unhappiness in the mansions as in the tenements."

"Have you ever seen the tenements?"

"No, and I'm proud of it."

"Well, I've seen a little of them and I'm not proud of them."

"I hate slums," said Perry.

"So do I," said Muriel. "So do the people that live in them. You really ought to see how they live. It would break your heart."

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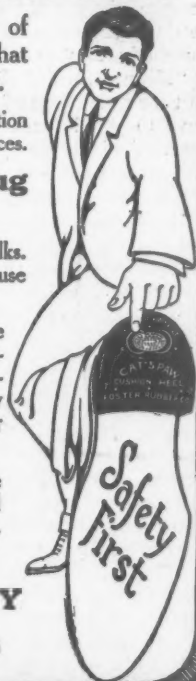
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"Thanks. That's a good enough reason for staying away."

"No, it isn't. It's our duty to know how our poor relations are getting along. You dared me to take this ride. I dare you to go over there. Perhaps I can get you interested in the sufferings of the poor."

"What good could I do for them?"

"You've done a heap of good already. The little Italian boy is safe at home, because of you, and Happy Hanigan is getting uncrucked. You might find somebody else to help."

"Heaven forbid! Your first little trip cost me five thousand dollars. That will have to stand for my contribution this year. And it got you kidnaped, and you escaped by way of the newspapers. You'd better keep away or the bandits will get you again if you don't watch out."

The 'bus was entering Washington Square through its isolated arch of triumph, which has led to nothing triumphant, since the old pleasure of the aristocracy was captured by the tenement populace. On every bench they were draped, Italians mainly, with numberless children fast asleep on their mother's laps or in the baby wagons or on the stint of grass.

"Come along," said Muriel, and started down the hazardous steps. Merithew followed perforce.

They found South Fifth Avenue dingy, and turned east in Bleecker Street. The Bowery did not look miserable enough to be interesting, and Muriel went on to First Avenue, where the elevated tracks added a kind of Brocken touch. Then she turned south with Perry, who protested that his ears and his nostrils were being persecuted. But Muriel would not relent.

In Allen Street there was suffering in plenty for the most avid heart. The dark lane was ovened in by the tracks of the elevated road, its thick-set iron pillars forming a gigantic gridiron where the people squirmed or rested inert like lobsters broiled alive; for some had been cooked to inanition and some still wriggled.

The street was filled from curb to curb, and the walks and stoops from

curb to wall on either side. Throngs moved slowly or stood exchanging comments on the torture of the day and the night. The day had been a famous battle with the heat, and people told of their struggles for breath as of incidents in a combat. There had been several deaths and numberless prostrations. The hospitals had been busy, and the ambulances had gone clanging in all directions. And bigger ambulances had lumbered through the town carrying off the horses that had fallen in dozens.

Most of the men in Allen Street went about with their coats on their arms, but even here there were some descendants of Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego who walked this fiery furnace without wilting their starch. The art of ready-made clothing enabled them to dress a little more foppishly than Merithew, and there were women who kept themselves neat in spite of all, so that there was nothing especially foreign in the appearance of Muriel and Perry, and no attention was paid to them by wretches too full of the problem of endurance to note or remember who went by staring.

Chairs and benches were planted in the street and on the walks so thickly that it was hard for Perry and Muriel to move about without waking some fagged wretch whom sleep had blessed at last. They picked their way like Dante and Virgil slumming in Hades.

Everywhere there were children burdening laps or arms, and always they had the preference in the choice of lesser evils. On the fire escapes mounting tier on tier, people were scattered as if there had been a battle in the sky and it had rained human bodies, and they had caught there as they fell.

"If I were God, I'd send a little breeze along this street," said Perry Merithew.

There was peculiar anguish in the feeling that the one solace these hordes of woe required was unpurchasable by human wealth or skill or merit. The whole region was a cathedral of prayer to the god of the barometer. Though no one knelt or upheld hands or gabled finger-tips together, every attitude was humbler than any genuflection.



Julian Eltinge, the actor, author of the article, "The Troubles of a Man Who Wears Skirts," in the May Green Book Magazine.

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Elsie Ferguson, the star, who has written for the May Green Book Magazine an article on her ideas of dress. She calls it "Backgrounds for Personality."

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- "The Meeting of the Greeks," by Isabel Ostrander.
- "Letters of a Vaudevillian," Art Furber continues corresponding, but with his wife this time—another amusing story by I. K. Friedman.
- "When I Look Into Eyes of Violet, I'm Through with Eyes of Brown," by Frank X. Finnegan.
- "Though He Be Dead," by Richard Barker Shelton.
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Ain't it just terrible? Here's Art Furber with a black eye and mumps an overcoat—the result of a pool game—as he is pictured by P. Fox to illustrate I. K. Friedman's "Letters of a Vaudevillian," in the May Green Book Magazine.

SEVENTEEN MORE WHY'S

One for Each of These Timely Articles:



Alla Nazimova, the subject of a discussion by Louis V. De Foe, the play-analyst, in the May Green Book—"Nazimova at Last Meets Her Big Promise."

- "The Ideas of March," Channing Pollock's brilliant play-review.
- "The Stage as I Have Seen It," by Geo. M. Cohan.
- "The Troubles of a Man Who Wears Skirts," by Julian Eltinge.
- "Backgrounds for Personality," an article on dress by Elsie Ferguson.
- "Costumes," by Lina Cavalleri.
- "Nazimova at Last Meets Her Big Promise," by Louis V. De Foe, the play-analyst.
- "London's Idea of Chorus Beauty," showing the famous Gaiety girls.
- A Chat with Granville Barker, the English Producer.
- "Gambling in Plays," by William Harris, Jr.
- "The Old Cry," a ballad by Berton Braley.
- "The Way to Write Successful Songs," by Russell E. Smith, wherein Charles K. Harris tells how he got his ideas.
- "Billy Quirk," an interview with the film comedian.
- "Ninety-five Pounds of Ambition," a chat with Fred Stone's dancing partner, Violet Zeli.
- "Filmdom's Most Talked-of Man," something about Director D. W. Griffith.
- "Stage Mother Goose," rhymes by Edward Abbott.
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- "Little Stories of the New Plays," just what you want to know about them.

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SUDDENLY Muriel paused and pointed across the street, to a cave-like doorway beyond whose dark recesses there was a blue curtain of moonlight shining in a rear court.

"That's the place where I was kidnapped, I think—if this is Allen Street. Yes, it is! Golly! Let's get away from here. They might put me in the cellar again."

"Not while you have your bodyguard with you!" said Perry, arching his little wicker cane as if it were a Toledo blade. "Let's come down to-morrow and explore it together."

"No, thank you," said Muriel. "One visit was enough." She turned and retraced her way through the endless spectacle of the same misery in manifold forms. Perry had been startled by the realization that he had wandered into the very parish of Red Ida and her gunmen. He was glad enough to hurry away. But Muriel paused again and pointed once more across the street:

"I've been there, too. That's where we found the poor Balinsky man who tried to kill himself, but Doctor Worthing saved his life. That's where Maryla lives—Maryla Sokalska, a beautiful girl with the pitifullest story. I'll tell you about her some day."

The name stabbed Perry like an assassin's knife. He felt guilty at first, and then his ready self-forgiveness told him that if he had rescued the girl from such a realm as this even for a few weeks, he had not done altogether ill by her. But Muriel said:

"I promised her I'd talk to her father and mother and make them forgive her. I wonder if they are at home now. Let's go up and see."

"Let's not," said Perry sharply.

"I want to tell them about Maryla."

"They're not at home, I'm sure. Nobody is. Everybody has moved out into the street."

"No; they're not over there on the walk. I'd know them; the father has a big beard and the mother is fat; and that's a young couple sleeping on the fishblock. Come on. I'm going up."

"But they'll be asleep."

"Maryla says they always work till midnight, and it's not that yet."

She was having another of her impulses, and Perry could not dissuade her or detain her. And he had not the heart to desert her.

CHAPTER XL

MERITHEW felt as if he were being haled before a judgment seat. Of course the girl's parents would not know him by sight, but Muriel might use his name. In any case he dreaded meeting the eyes of Maryla's parents. If they did not know him, it would be almost more humiliating than if they did.

He resolved not to go, but Muriel was already in the doorway beckoning to him. She warned him to step over the two little curly-haired cherubim sleeping on an old shawl on the very doorsill while their young father and mother occupied the adjoining fishblock.

Perry traversed the infants unheeded by them or their parents, but when he put out a hand to check Muriel, she was gone. She had vanished in the black of the hallway and was hissing at him to come to the stairway.

She kept ahead of him as they climbed. He followed her with increasing anger. But how could he leave her there? She went up flight after flight and he ran in her pursuit. Suddenly he collided with her in the dark. He trod on her toe. She gave a little gasp of pain, and now it was he that was the offender.

"I'm so sorry," he whispered, caressing her shoulder, "but you oughtn't—"

"I'm all right, but I've lost my way. I don't know which door is theirs. I'm afraid to knock at the wrong one."

"Better come back in the daytime," he urged, clinging to her arm.

"But now that I'm so near, it seems a pity not to go on."

There was nothing to help her choice. Behind most of the doors there was a silence. Behind others there were quarrels, or wailing babies. There was no encouragement to try any of the doors.

And it was asphyxiation to remain in the hall. The climb had set them both to panting hard, and the air seemed to give no help to the lungs. There was a mystery of gloom and peril about them and an uncanny communion in



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standing so close together that they could hear each other's breaths and could not see an outline. Her arm where he held it was firm and warm under the soft sleeve, amazingly alive.

Perry loved the dark, and a dark mood grew in him—a familiar mood with him in the company of women, but new in the presence of Muriel. His new thought of her seemed to make another girl of her. She did not shake his hand from her arm. Was she encouraging him or was she unaware of his clasp? His heart, never too regular, began to race like a propeller out of water. It hurt and scared him.

Muriel's very arm seemed to be thinking. Suddenly it moved with resolution, and she whispered:

"I'll try one more flight. Then I'll knock at the first door."

"I beg you," he said. "Please come away from this odious place."

She pressed forward but he clung to her, and his resistance brought her back suddenly against him with a delicate shock. His free arm quickened to seize her, but she shook it off with a sharp:

"Don't!"

She said it with girlish impatience and with preoccupation. He let her go, mumbling: "I'm sorry." He heard her steps on the stairs, and with the banister for guiding clue he followed her, struggling after her, groping toward her, and carrying a load of remorse like a heavy trunk on his back. He had disgraced himself before his own heart, and he wondered if he were really incapable of meeting a woman's trust with honor. He resolved to protect Muriel from his old self.

Suddenly Perry encountered a door at the head of the stairs; it flew open before her hand, and the moonlight broke in upon them. Muriel stepped out on the roof, and Perry after her.

II

IT was emerging from all prose to all poetry, for now he could see her, yet dimly, with a mystic edging of light along her whole contour. She was staring into the moonlight, yet drowned in it as if she were a sea-creature in the

depths. And there was a wonder about her as about painted figures whose eyes are not shown.

The air up here was deep and pure and oceanic, though warm and still and tropical. All about them their horizon was a saw-tooth of cornices and chimneys. In the humid distance were lights: some of them were the tower lamps of high buildings. It was not easy to tell them apart.

To the east was the river with the bridges outlined in luminous dots. There was hardly a sound except their own feet scuffling across the tin of the roof still hot from the sun and uncooled by the moon. They could see nothing but the walls surrounding the roof they were on, and as they grew used to the light it proved to be dirty and littered. They understood why the tenants preferred even the sidewalks to this well.

Perry grew sick of the place and disgruntled at Muriel's unbridled curiosity. But she laughed as she commented:

"It's different from the Ritz-Carlton roof, eh?"

Her voice sounded loud to her, and she lowered it in deference to the general hush.

"I wonder what is beyond the wall," she murmured. She prowled across to it, and Perry prowled after her. One of the numerous clotheslines caught him in the face, and he vented his wrath on that. He took from his waistcoat pocket a little silver knife and slashed the rope down.

"*Ts! ts! ts!*" Muriel clicked reprovingly. "Some poor woman will suffer for that. Rope is expensive."

"So is skin," Perry snapped, and shut the knife so angrily that the blade closed on his left palm and cut it. It bled. He whipped out a handkerchief and bound it up. Muriel was acutely sympathetic till she saw that his wound was not serious.

Then her curiosity ruled her again, and she said:

"I'm dying to see what's on the other side of the wall."

"That's the woman of it," Perry growled. "That's what bounced Eve out of Paradise."

With a sour gallantry he found a



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rickety old packing case, and set it on end. Then he helped her to mount it, and she gave him a hand up.

Now they could see across the wall, and the sight was as grievous as even Muriel could have wished.

They could look down from here on several roofs, more flat and less shut in than the one they were on.

But even those other roofs were not made for dormitories, and they offered no graces or conveniences. Only the worse conditions below could have made them tolerable.

Over the nearest tenement it seemed as if a plague had passed, leaving its victims where they fell. Some of them had provided themselves with bedding. Others slept on the tin. One middle-aged woman lay alone on a double mattress with a sheet over her and her head on a pillow. She was an aristocrat among paupers.

In the middle of this roof was a family of six on one mattress, their heads rolled to the center like a colony of melons; their bodies stretched in all directions outward. The mother's hip was pillow to the head of the oldest girl, reclining with a kind of Cleopatra majesty. She belonged to beauty and even in her disarray revealed a wasted symmetry and a pity of loveliness.

"The poor dear things!" sighed Muriel, with a dew of tears in her voice.

"They're like earthworms in a can," said Perry Merithew, repugnance sickening his pity.

Muriel sighed again: "I don't see what right I have to all I have. My own room at home is bigger than that whole roof where five—six—ten—fifteen people are asleep. And I never do any work, and they are tired to death. I feel like selling my pretty canopied bed and all my silver things. And I will. And to-morrow I'll come down and fit out these roofs with comfortable places to sleep. They work so hard they have a right to a decent place to sleep, haven't they? Haven't they?"

Partly because his emotional heart was not immune to the mute appeal of these sufferers, but more because he knew that she wanted him to feel charitable, he said:

"You must let me help. It's a bad time of year for me, and I'm terribly poor, but you can have anything I've got—always—for anything you want to spend it on. Here, take what I have now—I only ask you to save out enough for cabfare home. And while you are selling your silver things, pawn these things of mine."

To his own amazement and hers, he found himself placing in her hands what bills he had in his wallet and the coins from his pockets—the money that Ida Ganley had refused in the hope of more.

Muriel laughed softly in delight at his prodigality, and opening her hand-bag stuffed the bills in and poured in the coins. And while it was open, he slipped his ring from his finger and lifted from his scarf the black pearl that was always there, and took his watch from the chain.

"Oh, you're wonderful!" she exclaimed, dancing on the narrow platform and almost falling to the ground. When he seized her arms and rescued her, she thanked him for that also.

"You are such a good man," she said, "when you give yourself a chance."

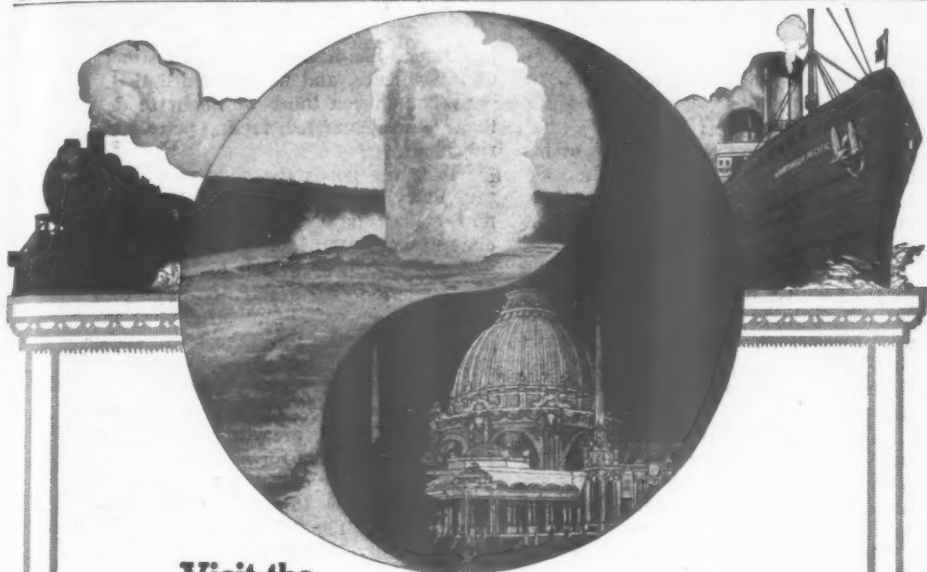
"It's you, not me," he mumbled, wondering why his voice broke.

"We make a great team, then," she said, never imagining how he had longed to put his head in the same yoke with her. "We ought to accomplish something for the poor."

It astounded him to see what happiness she was finding in this little farce of charity. It made her endearingly beautiful. If she had been farther away he could have admired her merely: on an altar she would have won him to his knees.

But she was so close to him, so completely in his power, alone with him in a jungle of animals. Opportunity kept whispering to him: "Here we are again, You and I and She."

He abhorred himself and tried to wrench his mind away from such forbidden meditations. He made a tremendous effort to shake off the old habit of soul. But it was a craving that he had never fought before, and it fought back at him till his heart was



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riven with torment. He kept his hands from her shoulders with mighty effort. He gripped the ledge and turned his mind to the paupers.

He tried to freeze romance out of his mind, and to curl his lip to sneers. He tried to cheapen her to himself that he might restore the balance of his faculties.

"And now, young woman," he laughed with a dry throat, "now you've got all my money, and if you tossed it over there it wouldn't keep that whole roof-load for a day. It wouldn't buy them a breath of cool air, or an ounce of brains."

"But I'm going to add more money to this," she said, with a maddening simplicity, for her heart was not distressed about him or his self-wrestle. He tried to be harsher and bitterer:

"Suppose you did. Suppose you took all the money you have, and all your father has, and your mother and your uncle, and all I have and all our friends have; suppose you made up a purse of fifty million dollars, and scattered it on all these roofs, how long would it last? how much good would it do? Wouldn't it be like throwing it into the ocean? If you came back in two weeks, wouldn't you find poverty still here? Some of them would have stolen it from the others; some would have wasted it in extravagance; but there would still be poverty, for there is always stupidity."

"Don't you think we ought to try to help the poor?" she queried, like a child rebuked. "Doesn't your heart ache for the poor souls?"

"My heart aches for everybody, if I let it. It would break if I let it think of such things, and so will yours. And after all, what good would it do? If you and I put on sackcloth and went barefoot through the slums of this one town all our lives, would the slums know the difference? If you gave all these people riches, would they be happy? Are rich people happy? Are rich people good? If these people want to get rich, why don't they? They're no poorer than many millionaires were once. If they knew how to use money, they'd know how to make it."

Muriel had no arguments ready for

his attack. She had acted on an instinct of benevolence, and he frightened that.

"What do you think we ought to do then?" she stammered, feeling petty and ridiculous.

"Take the goods the gods provide!" said Perry with unusual conviction, for now at last he was talking about his one religion. "If people have the brains or luck to earn or inherit big fortunes, let 'em spend 'em gracefully. Put the beautiful women in beautiful clothes, in beautiful homes. If all the spare cash goes to these beggars here, how are we ever going to have any fine buildings, any art galleries, opera houses, or theaters? Must everything go for bread—and no cake for anybody? Why should you turn yourself into a shabby sister of charity? It would only destroy your beauty. That's the most precious thing—beauty. It melts away if you cry too much or feel too sorry for yourself—or other people. Keep beautiful. Beauty is your duty."

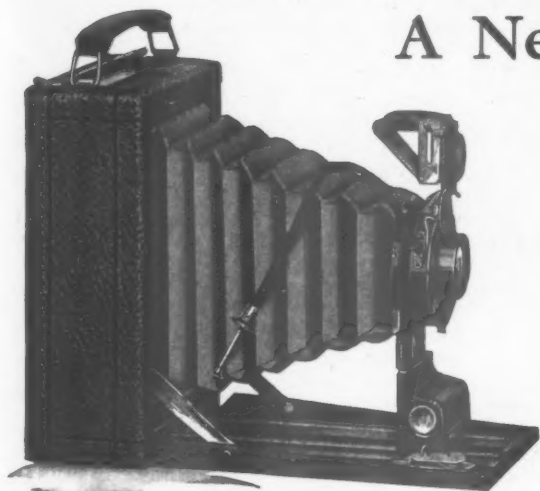
Somehow he had robbed her of her crusade without angering her. He had left her so idle-hearted that his praise of herself came as a help, and she felt meekly grateful for it. And after all, charity is impersonal and general, while flattery is personal. Benevolence is civilization; courtship is primeval, as old as the moon that ogled these two.

III

AS there are geniuses in music and color and form and eloquence and statecraft and war, so there are geniuses in wooing. That was Perry Merithew's genius. There is no type or punctuation that would convey his intonations, or the spell of his personality. His voice had a call in it; it evoked the imagination and subdued the reason.

The young Muriel listened to him as to a famous singer in a foreign tongue, not knowing the meaning of the words, yet tingling to the meaning of the song, thrilling to the rise and fall of the melody.

She was drowsed with his tenderness, and when he murmured, "Your hat is too big; it hides your eyes from me," she suffered him to take the pins from it



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and lay them on the ledge of the wall, and to take her hat away and toss it to the roof.

She was good and she was young and she trusted him, and he could not protect her against himself. She had brought him here in the name of mercy, and he could find no mercy in himself for her. He tried to be honorable and he could not.

With a mad, heart-breaking snarl he clenched his arms around her as if he would crush her; his hands fluttered about her hair in a satanic benediction, and he groaned "Muriel! Muriel!" as his lips found hers, and he clung to her.

The kiss on her lips and the frenzy of his embrace woke her from the stupor he had lulled her to. She attacked him like a wildcat. And she was strong and fierce with wrath at his desecration. But she could not shake off those elbows vised about her shoulders. She felt his fingers clenching slowly in her hair till the tears started from her wild eyes. She struck at him with all her power and loathing.

He never knew that she hated him. His heart had wrecked itself with its own war.

As Muriel struggled, the box they stood on tilted and fell. Perry went backward, dragging Muriel after him. His head crashed against the sharp upper edge of a moulding on the chimney. The impetus and the double weight cracked his skull as a boy smashes a doll's head. His body rolled across the face of the chimney, and slid to the roof. It cushioned Muriel's fall, but she was dazed for a moment.

If any of the people on the other roofs heard the clatter, and wakened, they must have gone back to sleep again, for there was nothing to be seen, and nothing further to be heard.

After the first shock, Muriel found herself crouched on hands and knees above Perry's motionless form. She thought that he was stunned, and she was hardly less ferociously angry. She would never speak to him again. He was a blackguard. And he was a married man too.

But she could not free her hair from

those talons. She tried to bend his fingers back, and they grew cold as she tugged at them.

IV

THEN slowly she understood, and if her heart had been as weak and vice-ridden as Merithew's she might have died of fear. Her instinct to shriek was choked by the ghoully horror of her plight. She was chained to a corpse by her own hair. She moved this way and that, haling after her the grisly encumbrance. She sobbed and prayed. She would have been glad to die if it were not for the shame of being found so. Shaking her head like a trapped animal, she backed nearly to the penthouse door before she gave up the hope of running away from her captor. She rested again, thinking, scheming. She snatched the hairpins from her hair and uncoiled it as best she could and tried to tear herself free. But he held too many strands. He seemed to lie there grinning at her efforts, making fun of her terror as he had made fun of her charity.

But his fingers had closed upon the outer folds of her hair, and now she was a little further away from his moon-blue face. She could twist her head up through her hair a little to ease the anguish of her neck. Yet she was no nearer freedom, and every moment brought her nearer to discovery.

Suddenly she remembered that Perry had cut down a clothesline with his penknife. She put her trembling hands in his waistcoat pocket and found it, and opened it, and sawed a strand in two close to his knuckles. She had to hold his hand while she wielded the knife, and the horror made the pain nothing. It was from the horror that she had to rest before she could sever another lock.

She kept listening for some one to come up the stairs. She seemed to hear footsteps and stealthy sounds. She was afraid to look now, but she felt that people had gathered and were watching her, whispering to one another, mocking her, waiting for her to free herself that they might seize her for this murder.

She worked with desperation, and at last she was free. She could lift her



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head, and sit up and throw her head back and expand her breast. The solace of release was so great that she could only be glad at first.

Then the instinct of escape took hold of her and woke her intelligence. She closed the knife with care and dropped it into her hand-bag. She dusted her frock and spat her hands together. She gathered up the hairpins, and sitting on her haunches she put up her disordered hair like a *Lorelei* weirdly triumphant over her prey. But there was no exultation in her heart. She was a girl alone in the ruins of her life, with only her scattered wits to help her to bring off what wreckage she might.

She felt about for her hat. There were no pins in it. Perry Merithew had left them on the ledge. One of them had rolled off and fallen into a side court. She could see the amethyst head of the other pin, but it was above her reach. She stood on tiptoe and leaped up to clutch it, but it was too high. She was afraid to wait and set the toppled box on end again. She must be gone.

She went cautiously to the penthouse door. She was afraid to look back. She entered into the dark and stole down the stairway. She heard quarreling behind one of the doors, a baby meowling behind another. She hurried past. She stopped short, for she heard two men coming up the stairs. She gave herself up for lost.

They parted and went into opposite flats below. She heard the doors close, and she fitted down and down till she reached the main hall.

In the street the crowd was thinner but still numerous. More people were asleep on the chairs.

The lights in Allen Street were dim. An elevated train roared overhead in a swoop as of pursuing furies. But nobody noticed Muriel with more than a dreary glance.

She walked along, trying not to hurry through the slow crowds, but she kept frantically dusting her frock, lifting her knees to brush the rust from them. She

walked till she found a Second Avenue car. It was so crowded with home-comers from Coney Island and the other beaches that she had to stand. The men were yawning and the women bedraggled, and bleary with the heat.

She rode to Forty-second Street and walked across to the Grand Central Station. There she took a taxicab to her home. She gave the man a handful of silver—Perry Merithew's silver.

The patrolman was coming down the block when she let herself in at the door with her key. She made a casual smile ready for any servant she might meet. But no one saw her. The marble stairway had a mausoleum look. The banister was cold as a tombstone under her finching hand. She gained her room unwitnessed.

She bathed and slipped into her nightgown and wept over her mangled hair and trimmed it as best she could.

She heard the servants come home, bidding muffled good-nights outside and exchanging soft laughter over the memories of their tawdry carnival.

Without any thought of irony, she drooped to her knees and begged forgiveness, though she was not sure what she asked forgiveness for.

When she rose she heard the patrolman's slow footsteps as he sauntered by. He was there to protect her. But when he learned what she had done he would force his way into the house and drag her to jail! And the reporters would follow!

All her father's wealth could not shield her from the law. Could God Himself shield her from the fact that she had killed a man? Poor Perry Merithew! Lucky Perry Merithew! He had escaped from a world where such things could be. She felt ineffable remorse, but she could not know just what to repent, or where her mysterious guilt began.

She crept into her bed. The sheets were cold as snow. She drew the blankets over her and hid her face under them, and huddled together in icy throes of utter dismay.

The final installment of "Empty Pockets" will be in the June issue of The Red Book Magazine, on the news-stands May 22nd. In it, we again see Hallard, the reporter who knew too much about New York, putting together the strands of the mystery.